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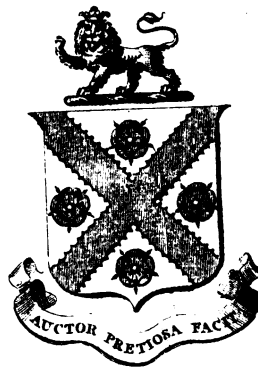
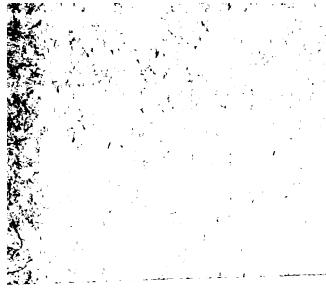
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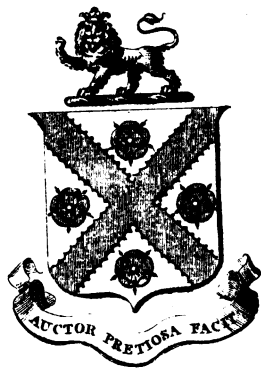
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James Lenox.







James Lener.

THE
LETTERS
OF
MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU,
WITH SOME OF THE LETTERS OF HER
CORRESPONDENTS.

PART THE SECOND,
CONTAINING HER LETTERS FROM THE AGE OF TWENTY-
THREE TO FORTY, ENDING WITH THE CORONATION
OF GEORGE THE THIRD.

PUBLISHED BY
MATTHEW MONTAGU, ESQ.
HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

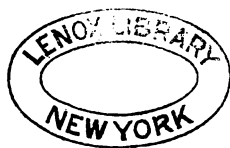
VOL. III.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES,
STRAND;
BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-ROW,
ST. JAMES'S.

1813.

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1851

MRS. MONTAGU'S LETTERS,

&c.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Allerthorpe, October 26th, 1744.

DEAR COUSIN,

I HAD the favour of your kind letter this morning, and resolved to return immediate thanks for it, that I might have a kind of right to such another. You see the grounds of human gratitude, it is one of the social virtues; that is, a duty towards another practised for the good of oneself; but, however, believe me to be as good as the generality of my species, and that if I excel in any particular, it is in loving my friends. It is no wonder

that a mind weakened and bowed by affliction seeks to support itself by the assistance of others ; but in my happiest hours, and when the delusions of life (for I call the happiness of this world no better) were strongest upon me, I thought friendship had high and noble pleasures. I am pleased with what you say of my Dutchess ; I think she is an honour to our sex, and a happiness to her friends. Every thing of this world is of a mortal nature, but I hope our friendship will not cease to exist till we do. What you say of the other person gives me concern ; I really love her, but if I find by you that she does not deserve it, I will endeavour to withdraw my esteem ; for a false friend, or even a slight one, is a dangerous thing. True and faithful affection is a pearl not to be cast before the profane. I wish you had hinted your reasons ; but I will wait till I see you, and in the mean time my affection will be balanced between the loadstone of inclination to find her right, and the attraction of your opinion, which in those

things we have conversed upon has had such force of truth as to draw mine. What an abominable vice is hypocrisy! it often makes falsehood appear amiable, and teaches us to distrust truth; it has perhaps made me take this woman to be good, and may make me suspect some better person of hypocrisy. I have often observed that the generality of young people are madly credulous, and old ones injuriously suspicious, which arises in the first from indolence and rashness, in the latter it is the effect of timorousness, and of having been often deceived. The natural shocks that flesh is heir to, are so many, it is inexcusable in mankind to add to them by their ill treatment of each other. Happiness opens the heart to benevolence, affliction softens it for pity. Heaven grant that however my heart may be afflicted, it may never be corrupted! and as I should abhor deceit in myself, I would avoid it in others. I am fortunate in some friends, (and I hope you will know I reckon you as one of them) whose hearts I know full of inte-

grity. I am sure you will think it must have been a great consolation to me to have discovered all those virtues in Mr. Montagu which adversity needs, and adversity only can shew. I never saw such resignation and fortitude in any one ; and in the midst of affliction there is comfort in having such a friend and assistant. It was once my greatest happiness to see him in possession of the dearest of blessings ; it is now my greatest comfort to see he knows how to resign it, and yet preserve the virtue and dignity of his temper. He went to London on Tuesday, about some business that required his immediate presence. If the Parliament sits early next month I shall go to town in a few days.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind,

Dover-street, 1745.

DEAR SIR,

I AM in doubt whether to thank you for your letter, or chide you for your departure; the first gave me much pleasure, the latter a great deal of regret. To shew you that while you are bounding your ambition to making your family happy, others have different views. I will tell you what strange things are doing in our political world. My sister sent you word of the comedy at St. James's, and the *exeunt omnes* of our ministry, and all their adherents. An interlude was played by Lord Granville, and the famed Earl of Bath, Lord Carlisle, and Lord Winchelsea; but to act exactly according to the rules of criticism, their theatrical performance was confined to the space of twenty-four hours; at the expiration of that time they made their exit, and the Pelhams, and their followers, are again on the great stage. It seems the ministry

had discovered a scheme of Lord G—lle's, as soon as the supplies were raised, to carry the K—— abroad, and turn all out of their places, and to bring in his own creatures and himself to manage affairs. As the Pelhams knew money was the hinge of government, and that by throwing things into confusion before this same powerful gold was obtained, they should ruin Lord G——'s schemes, they all resigned, declaring that while he was behind the curtain they could do nothing. Lord G—— took the seals, and was preparing to come forward, but Lord Bath's usual irresolution took him, and he withdrew his assistance. Without men there was no getting money, without money no getting men. The K—— asked to see his Lordship's plan; but as he could not form a system, his Majesty had the prudence to desire those who had resigned their places to reassume them. Indeed it was an odd affair to see only two or three persons to fill all places and stations; it was the old blunder of the K—— and two fiddlers *solus*. I shall end

my story with the beginning of Faulconbridge's soliloquy, in King John, " Mad world ! mad kings ! mad composition !" The Dutchess of Portland is just gone from me ; she is very well now, but has had a great cold. The Dutchess of Leeds is dangerously ill, but not without hopes of recovery, though the newspapers say otherwise. The town is very sickly, and the disorder among the cattle does not abate. There are rumours that we have been beat in Scotland ; but, I believe, they are owing to the fears of the weak or wishes of the wicked, for I cannot hear any grounds for them in fact.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**Tunbridge Wells, the 27th, 1745.*

DEAR MADAM,

I WAS very agreeably surprized with your Grace's letter, and a visit from our friend, who is so variously dignified and distinguished. He will give you a good account of the hurly-burly he found me in amidst boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, and all travelling incumbrances. He will tell you also how his ears were entertained with nailing and cording of boxes, and all the fracas one could possibly make for a journey to Tunbridge, which we performed very well the next day. Your Grace has seen the place, so I shall not say any thing of it in general, but only as to the company here at present. We cannot complain of want of numbers, for all nations and sects contribute to make up our complement of people. Here are Hungarians, Italians, French, Portuguese, Irish, and Scotch. Then we have a great

many Jews, with worse countenances than their friend Pontius Pilate, in a bad tapestry hanging. In opposition to these unbelievers, we have the very believing Roman Catholics ; and to contrast with these ceremonious religionists, we have the quaint puritans, and rigid presbyterians. I never saw a worse collection of human creatures in all my life. My comfort is, that as there are not many of them I ever saw before, I flatter myself there are few of them I shall ever see again. I have great joy in Dr. Young, whom I disturbed in a reverie ; at first he started, then bowed, then fell back into a surprize, then began a speech, relapsed into his astonishment two or three times, forgot what he had been saying, began a new subject, and so went on. I told him your Grace desired he would write longer letters ; to which he cried Ha ! most emphatically, and I leave you to interpret what it meant. He has made a friendship with one person here, whom, I believe, you would not imagine to have been made for his bosom friend. You would, perhaps

suppose it was a bishop, a dean, a prebend, a pious preacher, a clergyman of exemplary life; or if a layman, of most virtuous conversation, one that had paraphrased St. Matthew, or wrote comments on Saint Paul; one blind with studying the Hebrew text, and more versed in the Jewish Chronicle than the English history; a man that knew more of the Levitical law, than of the civil, or common law of England. You would not guess that this associate of the Doctor's was—old *Cibber*! Certainly in their religious, moral, and civil character, there is no relation, but in their dramatic capacity there is some. But why the reverend divine, and serious author of the melancholy Night Thoughts, should desire to appear as a persona dramatis here I cannot imagine. The waters have raised his spirits to a fine pitch, as your Grace will imagine when I tell you how sublime an answer he made to a very vulgar question; I asked him how long he staid at the Wells? he said, as long as my rival staid. I was astonished how one who made no preten-

sions to any thing could have a rival, so I asked him for an explanation ; he said, he would stay as long as the sun did. He did an admirable thing to Lady Sunderland ;* on her mentioning Sir Robert Sutton, he asked her where Sir Robert's Lady was ; on which we all laughed very heartily, and I brought him off, half ashamed, to my lodgings ; where, during breakfast, he assured me he asked after Lady Sunderland, because he had a great honour for her ; and that having a respect for her sister, he designed to have enquired after her, if we had not put it out of his head by laughing at him. You must know, Mrs. Tichborne sat next to Lady Sunderland ; it would have been admirable to have had him finish his compliment in that manner. I am preparing for the ball. I am just come from riding, which is something for me to do, in a place where one groans under the pains and penalties of idleness. I beg my best respects to my Lord Duke ; my

* Lady Sunderland was married to Sir Robert Sutton ; Mrs. Tichborne was her sister.

sister hopes you will accept of her's; and
I flatter myself, you sometimes remember

I am entirely your's,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge-Well, Sep. the 3d, 1745.

MY DEAR LADY DUTCHESS,

I AM extremely happy in Dr. Young's company; he has dined with me sometimes, and the other day rode out with me; he carried me into places suited to the genius of his muse, sublime, grand, and with a pleasing gloom diffused over them; there I tasted the pleasure of his conversation in its full force: his expressions all bear the stamp of novelty, and his thoughts of sterling sense. I think he is in perfect good health; he practises a kind of philosophical abstinence, but seems not obliged to any

rules of physic. All the ladies court him ; more because they hear he is a genius, than that they know him to be such. I tell him I am jealous of some ladies that follow him ; he says, he trusts my pride will preserve me from jealousy. The Doctor is a true philosopher, and sees how one vice corrects another till an animal, made up of ten thousand bad qualities, by " th' eternal art educing good from ill," grows to be a social creature, tolerable to live with. Your Grace orders me to give an account of spirits, appetite, and, all the articles of my constitution. As to the first, they are good enough to laugh at very little jest, to be pleased with indifferent entertainment, and not to be unhappy in dull company ; as to the second, I can eat more buttered roll in a morning than a great girl at a boarding-school, and more beef at dinner than a yeoman of the guards ; I sleep well, and am indeed in perfect health, and the waters have done me much service. I had, just now, a letter from Mr. Montagu, in which he

tells me he leaves his brother, to whom he made a visit in his way to the north, on this day, and proceeds towards Newcastle; he tells me he met Dr. Courayer at Dunstable, travelling with Mr. Stanhope; he has all the virtues, and almost as much innocence, as would qualify a man for Paradise, and to walk with angels, like our first parents. The little Doctor loves London better than the country. He has not only virtue enough to keep himself from the contagion of vice, but to venture to be the physician, too, of the infected, and the friend of the infirm. It is a hard case that your Grace forgets your correspondents for your Bantam fowl. Though I have not my head so well curled as your Friesland hen, nor hold up my head like your upright duck, do you think I consent to be laid aside for them? Of all fowl I love the goose best, who supplies us with her quill; surely a goose is a goodly bird; if its hiss be insignificant, remember that from its side the engine is taken with which the laws are registered, and history

recorded; though not a bird famous for courage, from this same ample wing are the heroes' exploits engraven on the pillar of everlasting Fame; though not an animal of sagacity, yet does it lend its assistance to the precepts of philosophy; if not beautiful, yet with its tender touch in the hands of some inspired lover is Lesbia's blush, Sacharissa's majesty, and Chloe's bloom, made lasting; and locks, which, "curled or uncurled, have turned to grey," by it continue in eternal beauty; and will you forsake this creature for a little pert fowl with a gaudy feather? That merit is little regarded now-a-days, I knew before, but little expected to find your Grace in that disposition. If I don't hear, in a post or two, that you have got an university of goslings, I shall really take it to heart. For my part, I look on them as the worthies of the age, they are impartial historians, unprejudiced philosophers, the great promoters of learning, and assistants of the belles lettres; and, if they fall into good hands, produce things that are admirable. You will say,

perhaps, that while I praise them I give you an instance of the impertinence of one of them ; but know, Madam, what I write with is a chicken's feather, made into a pen by a stationer's apprentice ; the first would never have been a goose, nor the second a man. From the figure of the pen, and its maker, I feared it would scrawl, and be flippant. Sure, when my stationer's youth comes to perfect monkey's estate, he will ape man's works better, else he will starve as a journeyman. I vow this writing engine is more like a tooth-pick than a pen ; pray let it make some excuse for my bad writing ; it is a pen fit for making apologies, for, it is sure to commit a fault the first syllable it attempts.

I am your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge, 1743.

DEAR MADAM,

I HOPE your Grace is sensible I should write oftener if it was consistent with drinking these waters; but really it is very inconvenient to apply a head to any business that cannot think without aching; I am not singular in this, for many people affirm thinking to be a pain at all times; I have more discretion than to declare as much any where but at Tunbridge. I have been in the vapours these two days, on account of Dr. Young's leaving us; he was so good as to let me have his company very often, and we used to ride, walk, and take sweet counsel together; a few days before he went away he carried Mrs. Rolt (of Hertfordshire) and myself, to Tunbridge five miles from hence, where we were to see some fine old ruins; but the manner of the journey was admirable, nor did I, at the end of it, admire the object we

went to observe more than the means by which we saw it ; and to give your Grace a description of the place, without an account of our journey to it, would be contradicting all form and order, and setting myself up as a critic upon all writers of travels. Much

Might be said of our passing worth,
And manner how we sallied forth ;

but I shall, as briefly as possible, describe our progress, without dwelling on particular circumstances ; and shall divest myself of all pomp of language, and proceed in as humble a style as my great subject will admit.—First rode the Doctor on a tall steed, decently caparisoned in dark grey ; next ambled Mrs. Rolt, on a hackney horse, lean as the famed Rozinante, but in shape much resembling Sancho's ass ; then followed your humble servant on a milk-white palfrey, whose reverence for the human kind induced him to be governed by a creature not half as strong, and, I fear, scarce twice as wise as himself. By this enthusiasm

of his, rather than my own skill, I rode on in safety, and at leisure, to observe the company; especially the two figures that brought up the rear. The first was my servant, valiantly armed with two uncharged pistols; whose holsters were covered with two civil harmless monsters that signified the valour and courtesy of our ancestors. The last was the Doctor's man, whose uncombed hair so resembled the mane of the horse he rode, one could not help imagining they were of kin, and wishing that for the honour of the family they had had one comb betwixt them; on his head was a velvet cap, much resembling a black saucepan, and on his side hung a little basket. Thus did we ride, or rather jog on, to Tunbridge town, which is five miles from the Wells. To tell you how the dogs barked at us, the children squalled, and the men and women stared, would take up too much time; let it suffice, that not even a tame magpie, or caged starling, let us pass unnoted. At last we arrived at the King's-head, where the loyalty of the Doctor

induced him to alight, and then, knight-errant-like, he took his damsels from off their palfreys, and courteously handed us into the inn. We took this progress to see the ruins of an old castle; but first our divine would visit the churchyard, where we read that folks were born and died, the natural, moral, and physical history of mankind. In the churchyard grazed the parson's steed, whose back was worn bare with carrying a pillion-seat for the comely, fat personage, this ecclesiastic's wife; and though the creature eat daily part of the parish, he was most miserably lean. Tired of the dead and living bones, Mrs. Rolt and I jumped over a stile, into the parson's field, and from thence, allured by the sight of golden pippins, we made an attempt to break into the holy man's orchard. He came most courteously to us, and invited us to his apple trees; to shew our moderation, we each of us gathered two mellow codlings, one of which I put into my pocket, from whence it sent forth a smell that I uncharitably supposed to proceed

from the Doctor's servant, as he waited behind me at dinner. The good parson offered to shew us the inside of his church, but made some apology for his undress, which was a true canonical dishabille. He had on a grey striped calamanco night-gown, a wig that once was white, but, by the influence of an uncertain climate, turned to a pale orange, a brown hat, encompassed by a black hatband, a band, somewhat dirty, that decently retired under the shadow of his chin, a pair of grey stockings, well mended with blue worsted, strong symptom of the conjugal care and affection of his wife, who had mended his hose with the very worsted she bought for her own; what an instance of exalted friendship, and how uncommon in a degenerate age!

How rare meet now such pairs in love and honour join'd!

When we had seen the church, the parson invited us to take some refreshment at his house, but Dr. Young thought we had before enough trespassed on the good man's time, so desired to be excused, else

we should, no doubt, have been welcomed to the house by Madam, in her muslin pinnars, and sarsenet hood; who would have given us some mead, and a piece of a cake, that she had made in the Whitsun holidays to treat her cousins. However, Dr. Young, who would not be outdone in good offices, invited the divine to our inn, where we went to dinner; but he excused himself, and came after the meal was over, in hopes of smoking a pipe; but our Doctor hinted to him that it would not be proper to offer any incense, but sweet praise, to such goddesses as Mrs. Rolt and your humble servant. To say the truth, I saw a large horn tobacco box, with Queen Ann's head upon it, peeping out of his pocket, but I did not care to take the hint, and desire him to put in use that magnificent piece of furniture. After dinner we walked to the old castle, which was built by Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, in William Rufus's days. It has been a most magnificent building; the situation is extremely beautiful; the castle made a

kind of half moon down to the river ; and where the river does not defend it, it has been guarded by a large moat. It is now in the hands of a country squire, who is no common sort of man ; but having said so much of the parson, I will let the rest of the parish depart in peace, though I cannot help feeling the utmost resentment at him for cutting down some fine trees almost cotemporary with the castle, which he did to make room for a plantation of sour grapes. The towers at the great gate are covered with fine venerable ivy.

It was late in the evening before we got home, but the silver Cynthia held up her lamp in the heavens, and cast such a light on the earth as shewed its beauties in a soft and gentle light. The night silenced all but our divine Doctor, who sometimes uttered things fit to be spoken in a season when all nature seems to be hushed and hearkening. I followed, gathering wisdom as I went, till I found by my horse's stumbling, that I was in a bad road, and that the blind was lead-

ing the blind ; so I placed my servant between the Doctor and myself, which he not perceiving, went on in a most philosophical strain to the great amazement of my poor clown of a servant, who not being wrought up to any pitch of enthusiasm, nor making any answer to the fine things he heard, the Doctor wondering I was dumb, and grieving was so stupid, looked round, declared himself surprized, and desired the man to trot before ; and thus did we return to Tisbury Wells. I can give your Grace great comfort in telling you Dr. Your will be with you in a week's time. The Dutchess of Manchester is very high in my esteem ; she has most generous qualities, delicate sentiments, and an expression that does honour to them.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most affectionate,
and obedient,
E. MONTAGU

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Oct. 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM afraid my friend condemns me as a negligent correspondent, and, indeed, I own the charge too true. It was some years before I found out that writing letters was but a better kind of idleness, and a civil sort of impertinence; but the longer we live in the world the wider the social engagements spread; and the more business we enter into, the more we learn to esteem our own leisure, and respect that of others. I have been, of late, a very remiss correspondent, but not the more careless or forgetful friend; my health has of late required so much care, and such continual exercise, that my hours have been too much dedicated that way; indeed, by doing my utmost not to die, I have hardly lived. Tunbridge waters seem to have made me as well as ever I was in my life, and I had entirely recovered my spirits, till these unhappy

disturbances in the north alarmed me. Mr. Montagu was at the meeting at York, where every one largely contributed to the raising and arming the people ; and I hope the precautions taken will put an end to this very threatening and approaching destruction. I find the Yorkshire gentlemen think it better to stay in the country, than to abandon it at this time of peril ; and, though it gives me uneasiness and anxiety, I cannot wish those I love to act otherwise than consistently with those principles of honour that have always directed their actions. I left Tunbridge Wells last Friday sen'night ; the waters were so beneficial to me I was loath to quit them ; but the weather growing cold, it was time to leave a place that is never tolerable but in sunshine. The first stage we made was luckily so near Lord Westmorland's, that we had an opportunity of seeing his fine house. It is built in the Italian manner, and the figure so unlike our houses here, you would take it for a fine public building. The rooms within are finished in the

highest taste that is possible, and furnished with all imaginable elegance ; the apartments are magnificent, and there is something so grand, and at the same time so cheerful, in the house, that it seems to reconcile what are thought seldom to dwell under the same roof, greatness and tranquillity. It is pity the hostile powers of civil rage should ever violate this elegant retreat ; but at such times, all are enveloped in the common ruin, and no greatness, elegance, strength, or ornament, are left to any one but what resides in their own mind, from whence no human force can drive it. How much is it, therefore, worthy every one's care most to cultivate what they are surest to continue to possess. I rejoice that the worthy possessor of Mereworth has a good retreat in his own virtue, in case of any public or private misfortune. But how different is it with many of our professors of taste, who adorn their houses, improve and cultivate their gardens, and every thing about them, and leave nothing waste and rude but their

minds, nothing harsh and unpolished but their tempers ; raise temples of honour to virtues and powers every where but in their own hearts, where there is no trace of respect and regard for any thing noble and worthy. If you had come to Tunbridge I should have had great pleasure in your company ; we had a very agreeable little party ; and, as prudent people should do through life, troubled ourselves no farther about the crowd than not to give them any reasonable cause of offence.

I am your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Mount Morris, Oct. 23, 1745.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE every day, since I came here, had the pen in my hand to write to your Grace, and as constantly have been prevented. I find, by your letter, you ima-

gined me, before this time, in the great city, but behold me still at a quiet fire-side in the country. Mr. Montagu's being of the association in Yorkshire detained him there, and it was but the beginning of this week he proposed to be in town; and some affairs he had to transact not being finished so soon as he expected, he will not arrive in town till to-night. Your Grace will say I am a most undutiful wife not to attend him there, but my mother is so loath to part with me that I have, instead of my personal appearance, wrote a very earnest invitation to him to come hither, if there is not any business in Parliament that requires his attendance. If he cannot come hither I shall set out the day after I have his letter that tells me so. I own I was very uneasy at his being in the north, in such a bad neighbourhood as that of the rebels, but he thought it not right to leave the country while in confusion, as the country gentlemen were then useful in contributing their money and care to defend it. He says they are

now very easy, and out of all danger, as our regular forces are assembled, and I hope all will again be settled in tranquillity and peace. I heartily wish Mr. Montagu may come hither, for my mother is not, I fear, quite in good health; but this I would not have mentioned, lest she should hear I thought she had any appearance of the same complaint as last year; she seems herself to suspect a little, but has the greatest submission that can be to all-disposing Providence. I hope she may live many years, but I think it necessary she should pass her time cheerfully, as that is thought particularly advisable in her case. My sister stays with my mother till after Christmas, and then they all come to town, where they will stay four months this year, of which I am glad, as the best advice may be had. I have brought a notable constitution from Tunbridge, and very good spirits; I think myself as well as I could wish to be, as to health. Tunbridge is very good for bodily infirmities; as to the weakness and faults of the mind, I cannot recom-

mend it. One leads but an idle and irrational life; however, it is not a very disagreeable one. There is variety of company, and consequently some agreeable people; as for the others, if one has but good humour enough not to displease, or be displeased with them, it is sufficient. All pages of human life are worth reading. The wise instruct, the gay divert us, the absurd cure the spleen, the imprudent shew us what to shun, the vapoured teach us that reasonable employments, and sufficient exercise, are necessary to keep the frame of mind and body in order; and, in short, it cannot be unprofitable to converse with human creatures, of whom even the imprudencies teach us experience, and whose thoughtlessness gives occasion to reflexion. It is true the study of human kind is not so pleasant as that of other animals, where all seem apparently to act for the end they were made. A slumbering minister seems not to fulfil his round of life, as well as the restlessly industrious wheel animal we saw in Mr. Baker's microscope,

an improvident family may not be compared to the prudent ants, a nation at variance in itself is not so happily amicable as the community of bell animals who so worthily require a microscopical attention; but however individuals may seem to thwart the end of their being, in general all contribute to the universal good. If we saw only the wheel part of the animal, how should we laugh at a creature made but to turn? and ask, to what purpose so much motion? But it is a subject of which we can discover the whole, and we see a heart whose blood is fed from the little milk, and limbs nourished by it. And thus it is with the whole body of human-kind; classes of people make up the members; some are the wheels, and some the claws; we rail at these as restless, at those as rapacious, and so on. Could we see the entire economy we should then declare how all conspire to the great end, and learn not to despise any part of so excellent a constitution. It is not possible almighty wisdom can make any thing that does

not tend to a wise end, and it is a good way to reconcile oneself to those we think fools, to look upon them as some way to be a part of wisdom, though unhappily the connection be invisible to us. So instead of a microscope, that considers only minute objects, take a moral and physical telescope, look over the whole creation of intelligent beings, and you will be reconciled to every part of them. Your Grace frequently complains of the conversation of a certain person who is not wise; I own the conversation of a simpleton is a grievance, but there the disparity of a wise man and a fool often ends. When passions have their sway (too often strongest in the brightest minds), Dame Reason's fundamental laws are as much broken by the one as the other: there is nothing stable in human nature. Folly sometimes has a fit of prudence, Wisdom often a fit of folly; but I own there is great difference in the conversation of the different sorts of persons; and though it may sound imprudently, I think a fool is almost better to

be trusted as an agent for our business in the world, than to be endured as a companion in our solitude, for we see unwise people grow very rich, even at the expence of the ingenious. But if I have weakly defended these unhappy dull people, pray let me enjoy that charity I would procure for them. I am, with the most affectionate wishes, and sincere and grateful regard, your

Grace's most obedient,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Nov. 19th, 1745.

MADAM,

I AM at a loss what to say in excuse for myself, and fear your Grace has condemned me as very idle. While my mother was with me, I was unwilling to leave her alone, even for a moment; and since she left me I have been in a con-

tinual hurry of visits. The learned faculty have given us better hopes of my mother's case than I could have expected ; they say it is not yet cancerous, and that it may be many years before it hurts her. Your Grace was excessively good in sending me the receipts, which I have sent her, and also the walnut medicine. I wish I had any agreeable news to send your Grace, but really we hear none that can rejoice us. Carlisle is surrendered to the rebels, who, I hear, behave civilly, and not as conquerors. Their success, no doubt, has raised their spirits. A party of Marshal Wade's took their quarter-master prisoner ; who behaved with great spirit, said they might hang him as soon as they pleased ; the Marshal asked him if the Pretender designed to fight them ; to which he answered, yes, and to beat them too. Ligonier is still ill ; the Dukes of Richmond and Bedford are set out. Lord Sandwich is aide-de-camp to the Duke of Richmond. I pity poor Lady Sandwich, she endeavours to bear up, but certainly she is in an uneasy situation ; I saw her

on Sunday, and she is to dine here to-morrow. Her ladyship enquired after your Grace. I suppose you know Sir Francis Dashwood is upon the brink of matrimony. I see him sometimes with his intended bride, Lady Ellis; he is really very good company. She is ill at present, but, I imagine, as soon as the writings are finished, and she recovers her health, they will be joined in wedlock's holy bands. Lord Rockingham has been extremely ill, but, it is hoped, he is something better this afternoon. He has gone through all the severities of physic. There is a new poem come out called *Harmony*; I would have sent it your Grace, but that I do not think it would entertain you; the poet seems to have the machinery of poetry but not the spirit of it; he forgets no poetic fable, but intermixes them with his philosophy, so that he contrives to make his system obscure, and his work very tedious. I think this is not a season for the Muses; those delicate ladies will not visit us in such turbulent times; Bellona's trumpet

will drown the gentle lute and harmonious harp ; the men are all become military, and the ladies politicians. I do not like such times ; I wish we had our peace, our whisk, and our vanities as last year ; that by the word Drum we understood a polite assembly, and by a Rout only an engagement of hoop-petticoats. I have not heard of any assemblies since I came to town ; and indeed, I think, people frighten each other so much when they meet, that there is little pleasure arising from society. The murrain amongst the cows is another misfortune ; it grows very general about London. I should think your young angels, when they take food after the manner of mortals, should rather prefer water-gruel to milk-porridge ; for one does not know how soon this disease may spread into the country, and the milk is reckoned to be poison. I find the Dutchess of Manchester is in town. Have you heard any thing lately of what was talked of at Tunbridge ?

I am, your Grace's, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Dover-street, Nov. 26th, 1745.

SIR,

I HAVE so long omitted to write to you, that I am now almost ashamed to do it; but as I know my cousin and you to have angelic dispositions, I think you will receive the sinner that repenteth. There has been such a chasm in our correspondence that I don't know where to begin to enquire after you, or to give you an account of myself; though by my sister, I believe, we have had pretty good information of each other; and that you know I have recovered my health and spirits at Tunbridge, as I have had the pleasure of hearing of Mrs. Freind's and your welfare at Bath. These first concerns being settled, let me ask what you think of the situation of public affairs? Alas! what a scene of confusion, and how melancholy a change, since I had your last letter, when peace spread its olive branches over the land! If we took

any part in foreign wars it was voluntary, and we could retreat when we pleased; the desolation occasioned by war was in countries strangers to our knowledge, and almost to our pity; but now we are not contending for visionary greatness and chimerical honour, but for our religion, laws, liberties, the enjoyment of our property, and the shelter of our habitations. Our adversaries were lately our fellow-subjects, and brethren of our community, to whom we have given, and from whom received the aids of society, and benefits of mutual intercourse, and have lived with them in all the social civilities of life. If their blood be shed it must fall on that very earth from whence they might have claimed support, and though they may deserve no pity, they can plead for it in the language of our country. I hope we are secure of victory and a speedy conquest over these cruel invaders of their country's peace; by the most authentic accounts of their forces, I think we have not much to fear from them; but it is strange that this

great and powerful kingdom should be shaken by the attack of a few straggling banditti. Lord Lonsdale writes to the ministry that their numbers are but 3500. They are well disciplined and regular, I believe, for temperance and patience are the virtues of poverty, and few of them have known plenty and the wantonness of heart, and dissoluteness of manners it is apt to inspire. The winter marches have, I fear, hurt our troops, but they are said to bear them with cheerfulness on this important and pressing occasion. Mr. Wade is said to be at Burroughbridge, and the Pretender at Manchester. Lord Lonsdale has burnt a great stock of hay and corn-ricks about his house, that they might not nourish rebellion, a very handsome sacrifice to his country, and the more so, as people of the greatest rank here have been endeavouring to make the utmost advantage of the unhappy state of their country, and have sold the assistance it was their duty to give. Self-interest has taken such firm possession of every breast, that not any threatening calamity can

banish it in the smallest instance : there is no view of the affair more melancholy than this. It is terrible to see people afraid to trust each other on this occasion ; every thing is turned to a job, and money given for the general good, is converted too much to private uses. There was yesterday great rejoicing among the mob upon a popular rumour of the Pretender's brother, Edward, being taken in the transport-ship, but that is unhappily not true, but a ship coming to the Pretender with succours from France is taken ; they had sent him over several officers, and Charles Ratcliffe, brother to the late Lord Derwentwater, is with them ; so he will have the honour to die for the same cause for which his brother suffered. It is strange the first example did not cure this family infirmity ; it is the worst kind of King's evil. The Duke of Cumberland set out yesterday, as did the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich ; the Duke of Montagu gave his lordship one of his regiments. Almost all our nobility are gone to the army, so that

many of the great families are in tears; and indeed it makes the town appear melancholy and dismal. Let it be said, for the honour of our sex, there are no drums, no operas; and plays are unfrequented; and there is not a woman in England, except Lady Brown, that has a song or tune in her head; but indeed her ladyship is very unhappy at the suspension of operas. Your acquaintance, Mrs. Hammond, I hear, is in high spirits. Lord Suffolk's son, Mr. Thomas Howard, is recovering from the small-pox. My poor sister is to stay in the country till after Christmas; is not that grievous?

I am, dear Sir,
your most sincere friend, and
affectionate cousin,

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Freind.

1746.

DEAR MADAM,

THE tender hand of a friend does all in the power of human art to heal the wounds given by affliction. That you love me, and interest yourself for me, must, on all occasions, give me comfort. It is not consistent with duty or prudence to be ever considering one's loss with those circumstances of tenderness that make one unable to bear up against it, so I will say as little as possible of the dear and tender parent, and endeavour to recollect her only as a most excellent woman, and try to become good by her example. She concluded with an heroic constancy the most virtuous life; from her prosperity she drew arguments of resignation and patience, and expressed the greatest thankfulness that Providence had lent her so many blessings

without repining that they were to be taken away. How few are they that do not grow proud and stubborn by that indulgence which made her humble and resigned ! She had spent her life in doing those just and right things that bring peace at the last ; and after living so many years in the world, left it with the greatest innocence of soul and integrity of heart I ever knew. How much superior is this to the forced and unmeritorious innocence of a sequestered cloister ; for after having bent to all the duties of human life, she had not contracted any of the vices or bad affections of it ; nor had she the least tincture of the secret faults of malice or envy which often lurk about the hearts of those who are esteemed persons of unblameable conduct. Through every action of her life she deserved to be loved and esteemed, and in her death to be almost adored ; for in that scene she appeared almost more than human. But this subject is too affecting, nor can I as yet think of

my final separation from such a friend with the resignation I ought.

I beg you would think favourably of a journey to Sandleford; you cannot imagine the pleasure it would give me to see you there. We are still roasting in this dusty town, but hope a very few days will carry us into the country.

I am dear Mrs. Freind's
most affectionate cousin,
and sincere friend,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

1747.

MY dearest Lady Dutchess's letter did not arrive till long after I had wished to hear from her; however, as I had accounts of your Grace's and your family's welfare from my other correspondents, I did not feel the anxiety I should other-

wise have suffered. My long indisposition hindered my writing to any one, so that I am now an insolvent debtor, and though I write every day till I am so tired I can hardly hold up my head, I am still on the wrong side of the balance. Pray has your Grace read the most melancholy of poems, Mr. Lyttelton's Verses on his Wife? I think they are extremely pretty; they describe a most delicate and tender affection. I must recommend to you Mr. Melmoth's translation of Pliny's letters; I think they will please your Grace; you will find sentiments of friendship and generosity that will touch a heart like yours: they are not in the epistolary style of modern letters, nor abound with turns of wit like French writers; but noble and elevated sentiments, and dignity of expression, will make up for the absence of little ornaments and embellishments. Your Grace will see how a great man was employed in the service of his country, and how engaged in domestic duties; his

desire to acquire fame was not greater than his endeavour to deserve it; he gained the favour of his prince without flattery, and used that favour to the advantage of his friends, and did not turn it to the uses of pride, avarice, or luxury. I had before read a French translation of these letters, but, I think, Mr. Melmoth's preferable to it: and I was pleased to see the noble Roman in a good English habit. The generality of our English translators work merely for bread, and bring a great writer down to their homely rank; Mr. Melmoth is a gentleman; he was bred to the law, but was too much an admirer of the Muses and polite letters, and left an honourable and gainful profession to retire into the country. But, I suppose, that the world might not think it was done merely through a principle of idleness, he has given them a proof that he has been conversing with the fine geniuses of antiquity. I own it surprises me to see him dedicate his work to a man who is the very opposite of Pliny, and I was sorry to see names put together

whose characters so ill agree. There is a gentleman of the law to whom these letters might properly have been dedicated.*

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obedient, and most
faithful humble servant,

E. M.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

1747.

MY MOST EXCELLENT, BUT MOST
SILENT COUSIN,

It is the hard hap of many an honest person to be forced to talk of themselves to avoid being forgotten; and, I find, it begins to grow necessary for me to tell you, you have a friend and cousin, Eliza, who lives in Dover-street. I have indeed had the pleasure of hearing from

* The Editor believes the person here alluded to, to be the Honourable Charles Yorke.

others that you are well, otherwise I should not have so long delayed making an humble petition for a line to inform me of your health. I hoped long before this time to have been in the country, but Scotch bills, and I know not what, have so delayed us, that the charming youth of the year will be over before I get there. I have been often at Ranelagh and Vauxhall, but I cannot think these favourite summer diversions make up for the neighbourhood of the noisy and dusty Piccadilly. Though I hear people talking from morning to night, I do not remember that they have said any thing worth repeating; and for news I hear not any. The press indeed has produced something of late; Mr. Lyttelton's book receives universal applause. I do not doubt but you have read it before this time, otherwise I would send it to you. Mr. Warburton's Notes on Shakespear are most extraordinary; he seems to proceed by new rules of criticism, and makes Shakespear speak as he prompts him, though ever so wide from his words

or seeming meaning ; the word *means* he changes for *medicines*, though there is such a difference in the orthography there could hardly be a mistake in the printing ; but indeed, according to the vulgar phrase, he too often makes poor Shakespear talk like an apothecary. I have been amusing myself this morning with looking over this noble piece of criticism, and, among many flowers, I have gathered a nosegay, some of which I will send you, as I suppose you have been too wise to buy the book. In *Romeo and Juliet*, speaking of the friar, Shakespear makes somebody praise his piety, benevolence, &c. and says, this friar the city is much obliged to him ; a common, though not elegant manner of speaking, and more common in the province where Shakespear lived the first part of his life ; but Mr. Warburton most sagaciously turns it thus : “ This friar the city is much obliged to *hymn*. And to hymn is to *laud*, and to laud is to *praise* ; ” and so, by incredible pains, and a new verb, he makes you understand the city should

praise the friar. In the Merchant of Venice, when a lady gives her friend joy on her marriage, and wishes her happiness, the lady answers again, "I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased to wish it back on you." Mr. Warburton says, it should be, "I am well *prised* to wish it back on you, from the French *appris*, which means instructed, and that the kind wish teaches her how to be civil," &c. In the same play, old Shakespear says, "Look how the floor of heaven is thick enlayed with patterns of bright gold;" modern Mr. Warburton, "patens of bright gold;" patens means a border in heraldry, and the lid of a sacramental cup,

I am sorry so many industrious critics have not been able to make sense of one line they have so belaboured as that unhappy one in the song, "Blow, blow, thou winter's wind," which in Shakespear runs thus :

Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude ;
Thy tooth is not so keen
" Because thou art not seen,"
Altho' thy breath be rude.

The formal critic, Sir Thomas Hanmer,
says it should be thus,

Thy tooth is not so keen,
Thou *causest not that teen.*

Mr. Warburton says,

Thy tooth is not so keen,
and why ?

Because thou art not sheen.

Now *sheen* means *bright*, but the commentator renders it *smiling*; and the winter's wind being, no doubt, you know, black, it was not sheen, so not flattering, and therefore, certainly preferable to this sheen enemy, and therefore not so bad as man's ingratitude. In the fine speech of the seven ages of man's life in *As You Like it*, Mr. W. makes Shakespear (in a note too long to give you) allude to the Italian entertainment of a pantalone, which, I believe, the author never thought of, when he gave the old man the slippers that fit him so well. One short note more I must give you from *Love's Labour Lost*; Armado to his page Moth, says, as he goes out, "Moth, follow:" Moth replies

"like the sequel:" this small jest used to content the gentle reader, but Mr. Warburton says, it should be "like the se-
 quelle," which in French means a great man's train; "and the jest," says he, "is, that a single page was all his train." What a jest, and what a commentator! I have, like a prudent person, filled my letter with another person's nonsense, and spared my own; but if you write not speedily, expect a very peevish scolding letter, the dictates of my angry mind. Can you not write without a text? and must we have none of your thoughts unless we will live at Witney and make blankets? Pray make my compliments to all your family, particularly to Mrs. Freind and my cousin Robinson, who is with you, I presume, by this time. My sister, and Mr. M. desire their respects.

I am, dear Sir,
 your most affectionate cousin, and
 sincere friend,
 E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Sandleford, the 12th of September.

DEAR MADAM,

IF you are as glad to hear from me as I am ready to write to you, you will not think me troublesome for addressing to you two posts together ; but my last was so short I do not consider it as a letter : this, perhaps, may not have the fault of brevity, for if I have time I am sure to have inclination to write to dear Mrs. Donnellan, in whose remembrance and affection I would contend for some share. I told you, in my last, I would give an account of our tour, so I must make you set out on the progress with me, and shall therefore insist on carrying you, in the first place, to Winchester, where we arrived on a Saturday evening. I know you will willingly accompany me to the cathedral on Sunday, and after that I desire you will give your attention to the building, which is of the neatest of the

Gothic kind, and rather grown reverend than old by time ; there is to the choir an extremely fine screen of more modern structure, but in a still more ancient order of architecture, namely the Corinthian. Having considered what time has done to the works of man, let us see how it deals with the men themselves ; the turbulent William Rufus lies here very quiet in a stone chest ; in another place, of all the pride and ambition of Cardinal Beaufort there remains only a mitred monument ; of the learned William of Wickham merely a brazen figure. The bones of Saxon kings, who fought bloody battles with each other for a less compass of land than a modern gamester will lose at a rubber at whist, lie quietly interred by each other, and their bones are contained in a chest not big enough to hold a fine lady's muffs and tippets. What an excellent arithmetician is death ! He subtracts and divides till he sets all accounts even, and makes the sum total of the king and cobbler equal. But enough of the dead, and let us pass on to those

who are still under the delusions of life ; in the evening we saw Mr. Dummer's ; for the pleasure we received there I thank you, as you informed me it was worth our attention ; from thence we reached Southampton, of which I need not say any thing, as you know it better than I do ; but pray let me ask if you ever went up the round tower, which, I think, commands the finest prospect I ever saw ? We staid at Southampton till the tide was full, and then went to Lady Peterborough's, with which I was much charmed. Lord Peterborough, in a letter to Mr. Pope, speaking of this place, says, " I confess the lofty Sacharissa at Stowe, but am pleased with my own little Amoret." He had reason to say so ; Stowe, like a court beauty, is richly adorned, and set off with great cost and contrivance ; nature is at all the expence for his Amoret, and has lavished on her charms that art can poorly imitate. From Mount Bevis we went to Lindhurst, to make a visit to Mrs. Medows ; the forest was new to me, and I was struck with a kind of

awe at it; we are apt to respect even inanimate things to which time seems to have shewn a reverence. I could not help thinking the aged oak must look on generations of mortals as we do on people at a masquerade, who assume and lay by their character before they have time to learn their part. We spent one day intirely in the forest, on another we went to Hurst castle, which stands on a narrow beach that reaches to the sea, and is opposite to the Isle of Wight, where we could distinctly discover trees and buildings; another day we went to Beaulieu, a seat of the Duke of Montagu's; it was an ancient monastery, had great lands annexed to it, and seems to have been a considerable building. If the ivy could have spoken it would have told us many an old story; as it is, it is a venerable and silent witness of the antiquity of the place, which, by its situation amidst fine wood and water, is very beautiful. We went from Lindhurst to Salisbury, but were so late as to miss seeing Lord Folkestone's. You are acquainted with Salisbury

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so I need not describe what I saw there ; but I cannot omit that we received great civilities from the Bishop, and Mrs. Sherlock, and were invited to dinner by them, which favours we were intitled to only on account of being friends of Dr. Courayer. Mrs. Sherlock carried me with her to church, and the Bishop of Lincoln gave us an incomparable sermon. We could not have the pleasure of dining with the Bishop on account of going early to Wilton, where indeed I was much charmed. Such a river for such a bridge, and such a bridge for such a river ! was ever any thing so delightful ! then the fine hill, the rich valley, the noble town of Salisbury, and the eminent steeple ! Do not all these things deserve a note of admiration ? I know you agree with me in admiring this place. If one can leave so fine a garden for any thing, it must be to see so fine a house. As to the statues and bustos they are certainly very fine, but I think too many ; heroes should not have so many competitors, nor philosophers so much company ; a

respectable society may be increased into a mob; I should, if they were mine, sell half of their figures to purchase their works, which are indeed the images of wise men; Plato and Anacreon, Cicero and Pindar, differ but little in features, but much in sentiments and language. We went from Salisbury to Stone Henge, which is indeed an astonishing thing; and every way one would account for it there arises an insuperable difficulty. We then went to Amesbury, where great improvements have been and are still making; the winding river is pretty, but the place is marshy and wet, and I think promises neither an improvement of health nor cheerfulness. The front of the house looks very well on the outside; within there are but few rooms, only one good one, and that is regular, and is prettily furnished with Mr. Wootton's landscapes. From Amesbury we reached Marlborough early enough to walk in Lord Hertford's garden, with which Dr. Courayer was pleased as at seeing a sort of acquaintance, but it has

nothing in its aspect to recommend it to strangers; there is a mount in it of a surprizing height, not raised to satisfy the curious eye merely with a prospect, but it has of old times been made as a military observatory, to watch the motions of an army. In our way from Marlborough hither we called at Lord Bruce's, which is situated in a kind of forest; the access to the house is very grand; you pass through an avenue of a mile and a half in length, with sometimes the opening of a fine lawn; the house makes little appearance on the outside, but it contains many fine rooms, richly gilt, well furnished, and adorned with many family pictures; but the place is rather great than agreeable. Are you not glad I am at the end of my journey? It is now time we should both take rest, but I must tell you that at Salisbury Dr. Courayer had the agreeable surprize of seeing Lord Feversham at the Bishop's; the Doctor was abashed, and his lordship shewed some little resentment; indeed, to go so near an old friend, and a new peer, and not

make him a visit, was not so well. Lord Feversham said he and his lady would have been glad to have seen us at Downton. I hope that before this time my brother Robinson has had the pleasure of seeing you. Dr. Courayer sends his thanks for the ring, but I fear he will find your advice impracticable, though this morning he had the *douceur* to say he was sorry my head ached. I should find it more difficult to avoid what your motto directs than to obey it, so you may be sure of my fulfilling your commands in the amplest manner. Pray make my compliments to the family you are with; accept those of all here, and particularly Mrs. Morgan's, who sits by me very patiently, and desires to be mentioned in the most respectful manner.

I am, dear Madam,
 your sincerely affectionate friend and
 humble servant,
 E. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Sunday the 13th of November.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR Grace, who is always indulgent to your friends, will easily pardon the omissions of a sickly correspondent. I am infinitely obliged to your kind concern for my health, and, to shew you that I am not obstinate, I am really preparing to go to Bath this week, and with less reluctance, as I have lately been severely ill. I suppose Lord Tichfield is by this time returned to school; my brothers tell me extraordinary things of his genius and industry: they go next week to Cambridge, very happy, no doubt, to enter into the world, which, in distant prospect, appears well, and at their age they have little apprehension of the disappointments they may meet with. Hope, like other blossoms, puts forth fairest in the spring. I return your Grace thanks for your congratulations on my brother's success; he

carried his election for Canterbury very triumphantly, but in speaking to the people (for the corporation is very large) he fatigued himself, and lost his voice for some time, and is now drinking Bristol water. I agree with your Grace in finding King James's Life very dull; he was a most royal pedant; his speeches, and his proclamations, were dictated by the goddess of Dullness; and what provokes one the more, is the high conceit he entertained of his foolish head; he thought himself equal to Solomon, and superior to Queen Elizabeth; most enormous errors! and such as nothing but the breath of flattery could have blown up in his mind. I think the English history, from his time, grows very disagreeable. In some reigns the kingdom is in the most terrible confusion, in others, it appears mean and corrupt; in King Charles the Second's time what a figure we make with French measures and French mistresses! But when our times are written, England will recover its glory; such conquests abroad, such prosperity at home, such prudence,

in council, such vigour in execution, so many men clothed in scarlet, so many five tents, so many cannon that do not so much as roar, such easy taxes, such flourishing trade! can posterity believe it? I wish our history, from its incredibility, may not get bound with the fairy tales; and serve to astonish children, and make nursery maids moralize. One thing gives me great pleasure to reflect upon, as I cannot help being interested in the honour of the times we live in, and that is, that though some of our admirals, and many of our captains, have been suspected of heinous offences, yet they have all been acquitted, and proved innocent, when the matter was nearly enough inspected. Then our friendship to our dear *dulcinea*, the Queen of Hungary, is most heroical; and indeed our undeserved fidelity to all our allies, is not a little to be admired. I always honoured the liberal character of Sir Timothy Treatall; it was good in a private person, but how great in a whole nation, and how fine would it appear on the theatre of the

world ; scene the first, act the first, enter England Treatall ; what next ? why again England Treatall ! and so on ; noble Treatall for ever ! Such a play can never be hissed ; Envy herself would never shake her locks at it. How will this noble disinterestedness outshine the narrow prudence, and unroyal frugality of Queen Elizabeth ! She gathered the fruit of the olive, and forgot the noble leaf of the laurel ; her low aim was to make her people rich and easy, by which she turned half the kingdom to low mechanics, and scarlet and fine linen were to be found no where but in her palaces ; indeed, when she was at war she made something more than fireworks of it, but still she had the mean object of peace in her head, and had no taste for modern glory : and her attention to the useful and necessary was unprince-like. Adversity, and a private education, might have done something towards this, and it is all one can say to excuse her ; and, to our singular felicity, her successors have not copied her in any of these political errors.

I was made very happy on Friday by hearing Lady Sandwich was arrived safe ; it is mortifying to me that I must still lose the happiness of conversing with her ; but I am rejoiced that she will lie in in England, for I could not endure to think of her being in such circumstances at a distance from all her friends, and amongst a set of people whom I should not imagine the most agreeable or tender. I shall write again to your Grace as soon as I am settled at the Bath. This weather promises us a bad journey, and I am afraid we shall find the roads in their worst condition. Mr. Montagu tells me he has heard charming things of Lord Titchfield, and which I think promise great future happiness to you. I may sincerely affirm I share your content ; and that every year may improve your happiness is the most earnest wish of

your Grace's much obliged, affectionate,
and faithful,

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Friday the 24th of December.

DEAR DONNELLAN,


I WILL not add to my mortification in not hearing from you, that of not writing to you. I am now better able to write than I have been of late; I am seldom very sick, nor have I the enjoyment of perfect health. I had the Love Elegies sent me down last post; my heart aches for the gentle fair mentioned in them; pity, that lives in the tender delicate form, and gentle mind, cannot be absent from her breast. And there is so much love and happiness expressed as really must affect her. The men have always a great advantage over us, and particularly, as Mr. Hammond says, they "may own the graceful weakness of the heart." Love is to them an ornament, in our sex it is looked upon in a worse light; and grief, like other passions, spends itself in words; but sorrow, pent up in silence,

keeps long its mournful residence in the heart. It is a sign of the prepossession of one's own merit if that of another cannot make its impression, therefore I cannot see why a woman should be less respected for a sensibility to merit in one man who dedicates his attention to her. It is unhappy where people love each other much, and cannot marry; but while they do not marry any other person, I do not see any harm in it. The richest dowry is the gift of the heart, and no one ought to marry where they think they cannot bestow it. Love is the frailty of the fairest minds,

And though its hapless case is falsely told,
By the rash-judging young, and the ill natured old,

yet among the best people it finds indulgence. I want to know what you think of these Elegies; they please me much; but between you and me, they seem to me to have something of a foreign air; had the poet read Scotch ballads oftener, and Ovid and Tibullus less, in my opinion he had appeared a more natural

writer, and a more tender lover. I assure you I admire the verses extremely, but if I had not known them to be originals, I should have taken them for translations. You will laugh perhaps at my proposing Scotch ballads for an accomplished writer's improvement; but to me it seems there are no love-verses that seem suggested by the heart and softened in the language, like some Scotch songs. I cannot put Petrarch and all his stars, suns, and moons, in competition with them, when they do but attempt to describe their mistress, "like a lilly in a bogie." Artless beauty, simple manners, and soft wishes sound sweetly through the shepherd's oaten reed, while he warbles sweet his wood notes wild; but to the artful lyre, or high-sounding trumpet, gentle sighs and artless words do not so well agree; the string is sounded higher than the tone of passion, and sincerity seems lost in words of too high sense and studied meaning. If you differ from me in opinion, I fear I may not have your judgment by which to examine my own



till we meet, for I desire you would not write when you are not well. I hope it will not be very long before I may come to town. I shall send Mrs. Percival some potted moor-game; I am mortified I cannot send her any more than a brace of birds, but they are so scarce I have not been able to get more at any one time, though I have endeavoured it these two months.

I am your's, dear friend, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

•• This letter should have been placed in 1743, as Hammond died in 1742, and the Elegies were published after his death.

To the Same.

December 28, 1747.

DEAR MADAM,

I RECEIVED your kind letter just as I was in the hurry of my departure from Sandleford, so I thought it best to defer

writing till I could give you an account of myself from Bath. As to my journey, I performed pretty well ; the first day indeed I was taken ill on the road, and obliged to repose myself for some time at an alehouse ; which, as the delice of the greater part of our countrymen, you would imagine no very bad place. My landlady was a very good woman, and, between comforts of mild and stale, grown to a comely size ; she informed me her husband made malt, as well as brewed it ; as soon as I grew better I desired to see the performance of that noble English manufacture, and was accordingly initiated into the mysteries of making malt. Content with my refreshment and instruction, I went forward with my journey, and performed it pretty well. The day after I came I consulted Dr. Hartley ; he gave me comfortable words, said mine was a Bath case, would be cured by the waters, but medicines were improper and dangerous ; and neither ordered bolus, draught, or electuary, or any of the warlike stores of the faculty. The waters do not

disagree with me, nor have I been ill since I came, in any violent degree. My spirits are not in the best order, which you will not wonder at when I tell you my brother Tom has a milliary fever; Dr. Wilmot does not perceive any danger at present, but cannot pronounce him safe till the fever leaves him; but by this post my brother Morris says Dr. Wilmot thinks the fever is rather abated. You will expect I should give you some account of the place, but I would fain defer it till I am in better humour; at present it appears to me very disagreeable. Here are many whom I know, but few whom I like; the rooms are very full of noise and whisk; as to the balls I cannot give any account of them, as they did not continue in the Christmas week. I wish Lady Sunderland and Miss Sutton may come here. We have here Miss Chudleigh, and a very pretty daughter of Lord Chief Justice;* but they are ill provided with beaus, so that it is scarce worth their while to be so handsome.

* Willes.

When I have more spirits you shall hear further from me ; at present I am very stupid.

I am dear Mrs. Donnellan's
very affectionate friend and servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

January, 1748.

I am sure so good and tender a friend will suffer for me in my present heavy affliction ; and I cannot excuse myself if I do not remove your uneasiness, as much as I can, by telling you I bear it as well as can be expected. It is impossible not to feel under such a grievous circumstance ; but I am composed and quiet, more than you would imagine. My poor brother's virtues and capacity gave me the fairest hopes of seeing him enjoy life with great advantages ; a fatal

moment has destroyed those hopes, but it must be length of time that can make me submit to the cruel disappointment; he was an honour and happiness to us all, and I never thought of him without pleasure. Alas ! how is it changed ! But it is our duty to bear these things ; and I have of late had too much acquaintance with affliction, and with the loss of those I loved. As to this good young man, I hoped it would have rather been his business to have grieved for me, so uncertain is health and strength. I will say no more at present. Adieu. My sister is as well as can be hoped. Mr. Montagu is most careful of us, and I cannot, amidst my sorrow, help thanking Heaven for so kind a friend.

I am ever your's,

E. MONTAGU.

•• Mr. Thomas Robinson, her second brother, died of the effects of a cold caught by being overheated in pleading before the House of Commons. He was a young man so promising in his profession, that Lee, then Chief Justice of the King's Bench, exclaimed " We have lost the man in England for a point of law ! " His

To the Same.

Bath, March 14th, 1748.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM sorry to find you have not yet recovered your spirits; but we, of nervous constitutions, are like ships that carry too much sail, we are driven too fast and too far by every gale; and cannot so easily tack about, and fall in with every incident, as those whose spirits are not so violently borne away; which are of the happiest disposition, will bear many an ingenious argument, but never any absolute decision; but could we know what was best to choose it would little avail, where there is no liberty to choose at all. But I

treatise on Gavelkind still continues to be the standard book on that subject. In sprightliness of wit, and fertility of invention, he much resembled his sister; his memory was stored with classical literature, his taste and judgment were so refined, and so accurate, as to have left on Mrs. Montagu's recollection an indelible impression of admiration, and a regret which no subsequent acquisition in friendship could sufficiently compensate.

am sure we owe one thing to ourselves, which is, to cultivate cheerfulness by all objects and things in our power, and to call every innocent amusement to our aid, to converse with those we love, read such books as we like, and take such pleasures as are proper. Weeds spring without care and cultivation, but fruits and aromatics must be planted and engrafted; pain and pleasure are in the moral world as the others in the natural; evil comes unsought, but happiness must be courted. How often do I wish myself provided with wings to take a flight and perch on your chimney corner! I am very sorry poor Mr. Percival has alarmed you so often; if he does not suffer from the bad weather now I shall have great hopes of him. I find myself every day growing better; I bathed twice; and, contrary to what it used to do, it raised my spirits and made me feel a greater degree of cheerfulness than I have done since I came to Bath; indeed I want mechanic helps, for my real happiness, God knows, is lessened; and though I

have many relations left, I reflect that even this circumstance makes me more liable to have the same affliction repeated; but I will mention this no more; I should rather endeavour to raise your spirits than depress them; so to call a new subject:—Have you read the new French play, called *Le Méchant*? You will not find the comic wit of Moliere in it, nor much conduct as to the plot, but I think there is a great deal of good sense and morality; the *méchant* is a character one should not think had existed if one had not seen it: I fear it had been still better had it been *La Méchante*; for the love of mere unprofitable mischief I fear the women are most noted; the men are for any ill they can get by, and as they have more ways of being bad, they are not so idly so as the women. I think the character of Valere, in the play, is not uncommon; a young person of good disposition, but by the influence of bad company made a knave for fear of being a fool, would forsake the woman he loves rather than be censured for constancy,

and disobey the parent he honours, for fear of being ridiculed for submission; he speaks ill of people without malice, makes connections without affection, and all this to conform to the maxims of his bad companion; but as he is rather seduced than depraved, he is soon brought back by Ariste, who says many things that I think will please you, and shews the difference between what is true and what is plausible; and indeed the errors and misdoings of those who are not naturally bad arise from not being able to distinguish in that point. I am very sorry for the account you give of Miss Southwell, but I hope when the spring advances she will recover. Why did not Lady Sunderland come to Bath for her cholic? You are very good to say you should not want any temptation to come into Berkshire but what I and my little Sandleford could offer; I will flatter myself that Mr. Percival will be so well as to set you at liberty this summer. You do not mention the little Pere, he does not write, and I want grievously to know

how he does. Mr. Montagu and my sister
join in respects to you. I am always dear
Mrs. Donnellan's

affectionate friend, and obliged

humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Dutchess of Portland.

Bath, 1748.

MADAM,

I THANK your Grace a thousand times
for your kind letter; but why will my
Lord Duke persevere in the gout? Pray
tell his Grace it is a shame he should use
a crutch while his grand-mamma trips
like a roe-buck; she has been more than
parboiled in Medea's kettle, and without
the help of a Jason too, without which
few dowagers look so smug. Mrs. Hony-
wood has lost her new husband; the
Fates will make her a widow in spite of
her haste to be a wife. I hear the

Dutchess of Kent is still very ill. Pray do you know Mrs. Trevanion, Lord Berkeley of Stratton's sister? she goes away from us to-morrow, which I am sorry for; she seems very agreeable and well-bred, and has a thousand other good qualities that do not abound at our morning coffee-house, where I meet her. We are too dull here to furnish any news or scandal. Whisk, and the noble game of EO, employ the evening; three glasses of water, a toasted roll, a Bath cake, and a cold walk, the mornings. I cannot say I have yet dared to cast a hope towards London; my physician says three months will be necessary for me to drink the waters. My constitution may perhaps be still more tardy; I have yet been here but about five weeks, so half my time is not expired. To say the truth, I imagine I cannot be immediately so well as to make a tolerable figure any where but among invalids. I am forced to dine by myself, not being yet able to bear the smell of what common mortals call a dinner; as yet I live with the fairies. I am much

obliged to those who told your Grace I was coming to town, as they said something I should be glad to have true; but here is another Mrs. Montagu who is like me, hath a long nose, pale face, thin cheeks, and also, I believe, diets with fairies, and she is much better than when she came, and many people give me the honour of her recovery.

I am, Madam,
your Grace's most obliged, most faithful,
E. M.

To Mrs. Anstey.

Sandleford, 1749.

My dear friend's letters are always welcome, pleasing, agreeable, &c. but the last was delightful, as it flattered me with the hope of seeing you at Tunbridge. Why do you doubt? Why hesitate a moment about going thither? The waters are good, the air incomparable, the place

agreeable, and you cannot make a better summer's campaign. Rural and polite life are happily associated there; you may have the most retired, or the most public walks, as you are disposed; the variety of persons and characters make Tunbridge an epitome of the world. I am apt to regret the absence of those things which propriety endears, as one's house, garden, &c. otherwise I think the Tunbridge life far from disagreeable. The reserve and gravity of our nation is less prevailing there than in any place where people are fixed in a domestic establishment, and have a little society of their own towards which they have so strict a fidelity as scarce to bestow a look or smile on a stranger; but in a place of this kind people easily enter into an acquaintance which they can drop at the end of the season, if it does not answer their expectations. You will see beautiful and romantic views; and the place which is now the resort of fine, gay, and polite people, seems designed rather for the retirement of savages, or sages

petrified to savageness. Pray let me know when you set out, that I may use some of those pens which slide so glibly over the paper. I may, perhaps, trouble you to seek me some house upon Mount Ephraim, for, to tell you the truth, I get as far from the busy haunts of the place as I can; for it agrees neither with my inclination nor health to be in the midst of what are called the diversions of the place. An evening assembly in July is rather too warm; and tell it not in the regions of politeness, but I had rather see a few glow-worms on a green, in a warm summer's evening, than belles adorned with brilliants, or beaux bright with clinquant. I cannot be at Tunbridge before the beginning of July; I am engaged to the nightingale and the cuckoo for this month. Sandleford is in its vernal pride; my orange trees are fair as the Hesperian tree, and without a dragon.

I spent about a week in my way hither at Mrs. Botham's. You may believe I was very happy to be with my friend

while she was surrounded with her fine children; there I acquired a fine girl of ten years old, ready baptized, catechised, and prettily instructed in the use of the alphabet either in writing or reading. My little cousin is now at my elbow writing to her eldest brother. Her letters put me in mind of a correspondence that I remember carried on between Cambridge and Brinkly. I am in hopes of seeing my brother Willy here in a few days; I hope his Latin speech was worthy of a fellow of St. John's. I shall be mortified if you do not favour me with a line by the post after you receive this, to tell me you are going to Tunbridge; I will never forgive you if you lose such an opportunity to amuse yourself, oblige Lady Romney, and gratify your faithful

and affectionate friend,

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Tunbridge Wells, Sept. the 8th, 1749.

DEAR MADAM,

THE various occupations of a place like this make one a bad correspondent, and having been a long time very much out of health. I was irretrievably sunk in a debt of letters, which is now something abated; but I am far from having acquitted myself of the devoirs of a good correspondent. I have been for a fortnight in a most flourishing state of health, which to acquire and maintain has cost me time and pains; drinking waters, riding on horseback, airing in a post-chaise, continual dissipation, and uninterrupted idleness; sacrificing still the end of living to the means. Our company is much diminished; of the many that go there are a few whom one regrets; and first of the rank of these are Mr. and Mrs. Southwell. I promised, or threatened, Mr. Southwell to write his memoirs; in the first place he is l'ami du genre

humain, so popular, so complaisant, that I (who am jealous of his favours) want to infuse a little of the zest of misanthropy into him ; then for the ladies from fourscore, to fourteen, he is their zealous admirer, and faithful humble servant. I found him guilty on the statute of coquetry with the Countess of Abercorn : old Mrs. Ashley has added a yard of whalebone to her plumpers merely on his account ; and really she seems now to have put a perfect farthingale over her upper jaw, to the great discomfort of her gums, who liked better the soft covering of her lips. You will be perhaps ready to enquire whom I pass my time with here ; why, to my comfort, there are some still left who are agreeable reasonable people. The Attorney-general* and his wife are my old acquaintance, and amiable agreeable companions ; then about twenty yards from our house lodges the wife of Admiral Boscawen, a very sensible, lively, ingenious woman, and who seems to have good moral qualities ;

* Sir Dudley Ryder.

we often pass the evening together partly in conversation, partly in reading. Lady Robinson* too is here, but so ill as not to come abroad ; but I visit her often on the footing of a country neighbour ; she is very agreeable, and has a charming little family, who are governed with great prudence and regularity. Here are besides three or four sensible agreeable men, some of whom usually dine with us, so that the hours one is to pass, do not go off in the heaviest manner ; and the great amendment I have found by the waters lately, keeps up my spirits. We have not fixed any time for going away ; the six weeks, which is the usual term for drinking the waters, will be expired next Friday : but the interruptions I have met with from illness in taking them, will induce me to stay as long as the weather is good. You know Mr. Montagu is always desirous I should do what is best for me, and the preference which we give to one place above another,

* Wife of Sir Thomas Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham, and Secretary of State.

is not equal to the difference of health and sickness. If ever I find a murmur arising in me at my weak constitution, I correct it by thinking how few people would be allowed the indulgencies and remedies that I have. We cannot always find those on whom we depend ready to make our health their first and principal object, which no point of convenience or pleasure shall overbalance.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, the 26th, 1749.

DEAR MADAM,
YOUR letter deserves many thanks ; it was the most agreeable manner of saying you had forgiven a fault which I could not excuse in myself. It certainly is a duty

in friendship not even to seem to forget or neglect; for though my affection would secure you from the one, and my respect from the other, yet appearances in some cases are almost a crime, and I am sensible I am obliged to you for pardoning my idleness. Indeed this is a strange place, for one has neither business nor leisure here, so many glasses of water are to be drank, so many buttered rolls to be eaten, so many turns on the walk to be taken, so many miles to be gone in a post-chaise or on horseback, so much pains to be well, so much attention to be civil, that breakfasting, visiting, &c. &c. leave one no time even to write the important transactions of the day. Since I wrote to you we have had a change of persons, but not of amusements; we have lost most of those who by the courtesy of the world are called good company; but of politeness or sense no visible decrease. In the beginning of the season there are many people of quality whose behaviour is extremely bourgeoisie; at the end of it, citizens who by their pride and their

impertinence think they are behaving like persons of quality ; and each, by happily deviating from the manners and conduct their condition of life seems to prescribe, meet in the same point of behaviour, and are equally agreeable and well bred. Tunbridge seems the parliament of the world, where every country and every rank has its representative ; we have Jews of every tribe, and Christian people of all nations and conditions. Next to some German, whose noble blood might entitle him to be Grand Master of Malta, sits a pin-maker's wife from Smock-alley ; pick-pockets, who are come to the top of their profession, play with noble dukes at brag. For my part, I am diverted with the medley ; the different characters and figures are amusing, especially at the balls, where persons of every age, size, and shape, step forth to dance ; some who have but just quitted their leading-strings, others whom it would become to shift into the lame and slippered pantaloons ; but who will believe it is too soon to attempt, or too late to endeavour, to

charm ! But I should be very weary of this place if I had no better entertainment than the absurdities of it. Were I a philosopher, I believe I should be a laughing one ; but I might have laughed here till I had cried in good earnest, if I had not found a very agreeable companion amongst them ; and it is to some partial representation of your's I owe the pleasure of her acquaintance ; you will guess I mean Mrs. Cleland. I am greatly charmed with her ; her good sense, her wit, her knowledge of the world, her manner, every thing delights me ; she has the vivacity of youth without its petulance ; her perfections are so happily tempered they have a moral harmony, if one may use the expression ; no note too sharp nor none too flat ; her conversation is too gentle to be called wise, and too correct to be called witty ; but with that mixture of imagination and judgment which cannot be described or expressed, I am charmed with her to a degree I do not care to own, as I have always declared against sudden friendships. She

seems to have almost as much indulgence to me for my honest simplicity of heart, as I have respect for accomplishments, and is extremely obliging to me on that account. Lady Allen has been often ill, so not much amongst us. The Miss Allens I am not much acquainted with ; I have given their aunt so visible a preference that I think they may possibly hate me, which, in a Christian sense, I should be sorry for, but no otherwise, for I detest the ambition of universal empire, even in hearts ; I would not be understood as having any dislike to these ladies ; I think them sensible, and I believe them good, but I do not think the Graces assisted Lucina at their birth. There are but few whom those delicate ladies breathe upon, and perhaps they thought Mrs. Cleland might officiate in their stead ; but I do not discover any traces of her education in them. We have here Lady Parker and her two daughters ; they make a very remarkable figure, and will ruin the poor mad-woman of Tunbridge, by outdoing her in dress ; such hats, capuchins, and

short-sacks, as were never seen ! One of the ladies looks like a state bed running upon castors ; she has robbed the valance and tester of a bed for a trimming : they have each of them a lover ; indeed as to the dowager, she seems to have no greater joys than EO and a toad-eater can give her. I am sorry for poor Lady Egmont ; I hope you were not in any way engaged in the last melancholy scene, for your goodness and humanity make you undertake those offices of friendship which ill agree with your constitution. It gives me great pleasure to hear you are in so good a state of health. I hope you will not quit your retirement at Richmond as long as you can pursue your scheme of exercise. In London one is so embarrassed with human creatures, one has no time to think of that excellent animal a horse ; though two hours in a day spent on his back gives one more spirits, cheerfulness, and fortitude, than twice the time passed with a moral philosopher or stoic. I have always thought tossing in a blanket one of the best instituted

punishments in the world for slight offences, as I am convinced half of our faults arise from want of shaking the machine, so that it is a medicine as well as a chastisement. I had fixed a day for leaving Tunbridge, but Dr. Jurin thinks I should drink some gallons more water, and I really find myself so well here, I shall be afraid to leave off the waters for fear of losing the joy of health. The Bishop, and Mrs. Sherlock, are just gone from hence; he recovered much by the waters, and has now no greater disease than old age; but that you will say is a complication of distempers. I am glad the little Pere is well, though he does not condescend to write to me; he thinks I am in the land of vanities, and so takes no thought about me; but if I am not worthy of his sacred quill, sure a gold pen, bought of Mrs. Chenevix,* and given by a fine lady, might write to a Tunbridge dame. If writing did not disagree with me I would send him a long letter for his punishment; but tell him

* The Pere Courayer lived at Mrs. Chenevix's toy-shop.

My silence has more anger and disdain in it, than the most pompous words could express.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

1749.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE not so well observed your orders to repair my looks as I could wish. I had a little return of my complaint, which has humbled my countenance; however, I am well again, and my nerves and spirits are improved by constant riding on horseback. You need not warn me against too constant application; my health requires so much care, that I have little attention to any thing else. I agree with you, that learning languages is rather the business of childhood than of persons grown up. A memory fit to receive impressions, and a mind not capable of reasoning, are the properest

capacities for acquirements of this sort ; but when we are young we are too idle to seek advantages not offered to us ; and though I will own any one language contains more books than I should ever read, yet the best writers are but few. Books but indifferently written, and the best subjects ill treated, afford little delight. Apropos of books ; I have read the first volume of Mrs. Pilkington ; she has a pretty genius for poetry, a turn of wit and satire, and vanity pour les mettre en œuvre ; she never suppresses a good thought, nor forgets a bon mot, though said seven years before ; her apologies do not prove her innocent ; one sees through her character, but at the same time one imagines nature meant her well in the gifts it gave her, and that a bad education, bad company, and a bad husband, perverted her. It is often said that wit is a dangerous quality ; it is there meant that it is an offensive weapon that may attack friend as well as enemy, and is a perilous thing in society ; but wit in women is apt to have other bad

consequences; like a sword without a scabbard it wounds the wearer, and provokes assailants. I am sorry to say the generality of women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity; perhaps it inspires too much confidence in the possessor, and raises an inclination in the men towards them, without inspiring an esteem; so that they are more attacked and less guarded than other women. Mrs. Pilkington is very severe on the clergy; but I hope they look on her spite as an encomium. She is very saucy about some Bishops and some Bishops' ladies; but I dare say they are above being mortified by her. The charge of jealousy is a little provoking; it is as much as to say a lady wants charms and a prelate chastity; whereas, by courtesy, all ladies have the first, and all prelates the latter. You must excuse me if I own I could not help laughing at that passage. I thought I saw the lady armed in the terrors of severe virtue, and the good-humoured Bishop smiling with soft and gentle courtesy; and from the good qualities of

both, the saucy author has drawn matter of criticism. I am impatient for the second volume, which she promises shall be more entertaining than the first. By the by, what a ridiculous light she makes Mr. Worsdale appear in! A beau dressed from Monmouth-street would not make so absurd a figure as a man setting up for a wit with purchased poetry. Wit and sense are a sort of stock that cannot be transferred; we may purchase another man's house, land, apparel, or furniture, and it becomes our own to wear and use; but the riches, and furniture, and dress of the mind, are not to be so appropriated. I have sent you some small feathers, that you may at your convenient leisure finish me a rose and send it down; it will be honour enough to me if I can imitate. It is now grown the fashion to borrow ornaments for cabinets and dressing-rooms of birds and fishes, and vanity and virtuoso-ship go hand in hand. You are very good in thinking of my brothers; I grow impatient for their arrival; I propose to come to town to see them, and I imagine

by that time you will have left Kensington. I must leave you to dress for dinner, though I prefer your company to eating and dressing. How few of our employments are regulated by inclination !

I am, dear Madam,
your very sincere and affectionate friend,
and humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

DEAR MADAM,
Two days before I received your kind and agreeable letter, I had prepared my pen, ink, and paper, to write to you ; but some domestic affairs prevented me ; I did not design to mortify myself so far with a penance enjoined me by a lay doctor, as not to write to my dear Mrs. Donnellan, of whom I think often, and with great desire to know how she does, what she does, and if she remembers me.

I agree with you that Miss Clarissa Harlow is a melancholy companion ; her story is very affecting ; and though it wants two of the greatest merits of a narration, elegance and brevity, yet it is interesting and natural ; her virtue is exalted to the highest degree human nature is capable of, with all the assistance of piety, goodness of disposition, the best education, and constant practice of what is right ; her virtue is as amiable as severe, which shews art in the writer, for it is difficult for the same thing to be the object of love and reverence ; and a strict character, like regular features, is apt not to please from its too great exactness. Lovelace is a detestable wretch, constant in nothing but mischief ; his good resolutions soon laid aside, and his repentance very short ; a shocking levity in the most affecting instances ; a character of pride without its usual mixture, generosity ; great captiousness without delicacy ; a nice sense of blame without an intention of being innocent ; the most injurious, and at the same time the most revengeful

of men ; in short, I think his character unnatural, and that he might have brought about the mischief without so many inconsistencies as are put into his composition. There is a certain connection of vices and virtues, and there is no creature in whom they are not in some degree blended ; some shadow of virtue in the worst, some allay of vice in the best. There is a great uniformity in the character of Clarissa ; she is always the same, rising in virtue and dignity to the occasion. Miss Howe's character is very natural, and well kept up ; but Hickman and she are not well matched. Mrs. Howe, with her parental authority, is a representative of many good mothers ; always in the right because she is old ; always to be obeyed because she is a parent ; very good motherly logic. Madam Howe was a petulant wife as well as an imperious mother ; why did not Miss let her and Mr. Anthony Harlow join their obstinacy, covetousness, and infirmities together ? I approved the party. Our screen goes on well. I wish you would be so good as to

get Lucas to send half an ounce of French partridge feathers, and half an ounce of the best dyed yellow feathers to you; and that you would be so good as send them in covers. Pray has not the macaw dropt some small blue or yellow feathers? I desire my best respects to Mrs. Percival. I grieve for the poor tippet, for which I have a grateful remembrance; it was a comfortable friend in cold weather. Mr. Montagu is much your's.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful
friend,

E. M.

To the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen.

Hill-street, Tuesday night.

DEAR MADAM,

You see with what zeal I endeavour to maintain that place in your thoughts which the good fortune of being your near neighbour on the hill first gave me;

though I parted with you only on Sunday night, and hope to meet you again on Thursday morning, I dare not trust even that short interval without entering some claim to your remembrance. If I did not know your present situation to be very vacant of pleasure, company, and business, I should be afraid to indulge myself in this intrusion, and might rather rely on your goodness to cast a moment's thought upon me at a time of leisure, than boldly demand it by letter; and when you are at home with Mr. Boscawen, and all your friends about you, I shall only desire you sometimes to review that part of your memory where you have laid me up; I fancy you will find me under the article bagatelle, several degrees below what you esteem, some distant from what you love, and perhaps not just au niveau of what you like; but still your favours to me, and my regard for you, make me promise myself I shall have some station there; and there are places of so much dignity in themselves that the lowest stations in them are honourable,

and among such do I reckon the sacred treasury of your remembrance. It is usual with travellers to give an account of their voyages, but though I travelled by land and water, my journey lying through the turnpike-road, and well-navigated Thames, it will be dangerous to give my imagination its full scope in so well-known a track ; but do me the honour to believe, that had I gone the same number of miles in Arabia, or had ferried over the Nile, I would have made elephants kneel to do you obeisance, and crocodiles weep elegies on my departure from you. But, without fishing in the Nile for wonders, I saw at Wickham the miracle of the moral world, a Christian poet,* an humble philosopher, a great genius without contempt of those who have none ; so do not look upon my journey as without a glorious event, or sight uncommon, for I believe, one might travel round the world, and, take him for all in all, one should never look upon his like again. I

* Mr. Gilbert West, translator of Pindar, and author of the Observations on the Resurrection.

am charmed with Mrs. West, and approve all you said of her. She is neither a tenth Muse, nor a fourth Grace, but she is better than all put together. I believe it may be truly said of her,

That she always speaks her thought,
And always thinks the very thing she ought.

Her vivacity, easiness of behaviour, and good sense, delight me. She is quite original, and I think one cannot rank her under any particular species of character without robbing her of something that is truly her own. If one said good, agreeable, amiable, it is still leaving out a great deal; and I do not know what name to give her character, but *pour chiffres*, she should have honesty *pour sa devise*, *la bonté pour ame*, and good sense and cheerfulness for supporters. Mr. West has been so good as to find out a cottage for me, and we propose to go to Wickham on Thursday; I chose that day that I might have the additional pleasure of seeing you, so pray come as early as you can. The pleasure of being

near Mr. West gets the better of all considerations in regard to the situation of my cottage; and though it is rather too far from London, I think I shall go thither with greater alacrity than to any place nearer town, where one cannot have such a neighbour, and I hope it will be an inducement to you to visit my hermitage, where you shall be entertained with the wholesome fare of brown bread, sincerity, and red cow's milk, which afford good nourishment to the mind and body; and far away be the poison of ragoûts and flattery, and the modern arts of cookery and compliment;

But such savoury messes,
As neat-handed Phillis dresses,

served in a wooden dish, you shall be welcome to; and if we can get Mr. West and his wife of the party, we shall have a feast of reason that would please a true ancient epicurean, and stoic too. I am sorry I cannot amuse you with any news or chat of the town, but I have not seen any person who could give me infor-

mation of that sort. I hear there is great strife and contention between Mr. Barry and Garrick, each acting the part of Romeo every night, and that the ladies think the first makes the better lover, by which one may learn they think beauty a better qualification than sense in that character; for Barry always seems to betray the fool in all the parts he appears in. Lady Townshend says he has sentimental blue eyes; it seems to me the sentiment Lady Townshend admires in Mr. Barry's eyes might bear an interpretation not more elegant than my cousin's translation of *en famille* by the word higgledy-piggledy. I wish you would come on to London on Friday, instead of going to Hatchlands. I believe we shall stay here some time, for Mr. Montagu seems in no manner of haste to go into the country; for my part I repine at losing so many days that one might enjoy in the pleasures of the rural scene; and at this time of the year one is more choice and covetous of good weather. Sunshine at this time, like chearfulness in old age, pleases the

more as it is not the usual temper of the season. I was very glad to hear by my brother that you were better; but pray have great attention to your health, for believe me, even with the best spirits, one can but just keep up to the mark of content without it; so if advice of physicians is necessary let not any consideration tempt you to neglect it. As to my cousin, whose ruling maxim is, the more the merrier, she will easily be prevailed on to come to London; and if she gathers mirth by poll tax, this is undoubtedly the place for her. I could wish to get into the country while I am well enough to read and amuse myself; if I carried any sense to Tunbridge, (which indeed I am not sure of) I have dissipated it entirely, for my head feels weaker than ever; if I had laid out any talents in the wit of the times I might account for being so exhausted. Some people reduce their wit to an impalpable powder, and mix it up in a rebus; other's wrap up their's in a riddle, but mine and Mr. Plunket's, certainly went off by insensible perspiration

in small-talk. I am extremely ashamed of the length of my letter, as it is the first time of my appearing to you in this shape; but pray remember I did not begin with an encomium upon brevity, like good Mr. Dowden, when he designed us a longer sermon than usual; and I really look upon a long letter as the only opiate that does not hurt the nerves; and happy shall I be if I can be ranked among those benevolent writers who, Mr. Pope says, are sleepless themselves, to give their readers sleep. If you ever talk in your sleep, I should be glad if you would make my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Smith, if they should be with you when you receive this. As to my cousin, with all the affection of a cousin, and all the tenderness of an aunt, I greet her; for her sake may every name she bears be made into a rebus, and every object she sees into a riddle. But for her lovers, let them not speak in parable, but in plain and honest English, else her shield and buckler of decorum, the *honi soit qui mal y pense*, by which she signifies

she is not to avoid or understand any expression that is not very plain and unequivocal, may occasion infinite loss of time, and a tedious delay of matrimony.

I am dear Mrs. Boscawen's
most obedient, obliged, and faithful
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 16th, 1749.

My dear Mrs. Boscawen knows enough of the hurry and bustle of London not to expect the performance of the devoirs of friendship from any of its wicked inhabitants. Had I inhabited the regions of peace, leisure, and reason, I should have told you long ago that I was much concerned at the complaint of your eyes; but I have been in so many shops to buy what I did not want, and in so many

houses to visit people I did not care for, and in so many places to learn news I was not interested in, that, for myself and my friends, no hours remained. This sort of life is by no means to be reckoned amongst les égaremens du coeur et de l'esprit; for the heart acts no part in the scene, but is merely attending to the animal œconomy. What is the antidote or cure of the fatal poison of this city tarantula, so much worse than that of the fields, as the dancing is constant, and the giddiness perpetual, and not to be cured by a reasonable degree of exercise: for we continue this figure-dance in regular confusion till Holbein's universal partner takes us by the hand? Reason, say you, would be the cure; but, my dear, do you think reason knocks at people's doors like the Evening Post? Or comes every morning like the Daily Advertiser? If he comes as a Daily Advertiser it is to people in the country; in town he does not come out above once a year, like the almanac. Reason is an old gentleman, who from the infancy of

the world, to this its riper age, has ever found people hard of hearing, and by the necessity of frequent repetitions of his advice is now grown so hoarse he utters but in whispers, and that only when people commune with their own hearts, in their chambers, and are still. After my deserved panegyric on the city of London, it will not sound generous to say I wish you here; but the habit of speaking truth (which I brought from the country) will prevail, and I will confess that before I go out of town I could be glad to enjoy some of your conversation; our departure is deferred till next week. I cannot deny that after the gaieties of Tunbridge, and dissipation of London, I shall be glad to enter into still life. The country does not indeed wear the rich livery of summer, but books will supply the *void* of every season and situation. If one sighs for pastoral scenes, and rural beauty, the fields bloom in description, and look green in song. If human passions are the enquiry, what volumes on the subject! If the actions of

men excite our attention and curiosity it is but turning to history ; and statesmen, heroes, lawgivers, sit down by your fire-side, and tell you the sum of their merit, their glory, their faults, and disgraces, which would you see still magnified beyond the life,

Read, what in every age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.

Or, if the smaller errors, and lesser ridicules of common life amuse you, you may take up the Comic Muse. Thus I suppose you spend your time at Hatchlands, while I know nothing of antiquity but the cry of old clothes, nor any thing good of the present times but hot codlings. The cruel owner of the house near Mr. West makes unreasonable demands ; we are going to treat for one about two miles from him, which Mrs. West and he went with us to see yesterday ; it is in every thing that I could wish, but that it is too far from Wickham, which I am the more concerned at, as Mrs. West does not love to go so far from home. What

a delightful neighbourhood shall we be in ! Do not you envy me ? In spite of envy though, I must tell you Mr. West says he loves and honours you ; knowing him, and knowing you, I did not doubt it, but methinks it was relying much on my generosity and friendship to think I should be pleased to hear it ; by which, Madam, I would modestly hint, and decently insinuate, that he loves and honours me too, for he must honour a generous principle in any one, and love an affectionate one ; so I think I have made out my proposition in a very logical manner, and given it almost the force of a syllogism, and a syllogism is like a twisted cobweb, though the single thread will not bear handling, yet twisted, and entwisted, by the instruments of rhetoric, it is hard to be broken. But I am in the fourth page of my letter, and not one word of news yet. Shall I begin with a gentleman who is going to take a wife of his own, or one who has taken the wife of another ? There is more zest in the latter story, but more dignity in the

former. The Duke of Ancaster is going to take unto wife the daughter of Mr. Panton; the match is at last agreed upon, and coaches, and jewels, and horses, servants, and houses, and clothes, and all the fine things with which Hymen now embroiders his saffron robe, are bespoken. Methinks I repent promising the other story, but having awakened your curiosity, there will be more charity in venting the scandal than in suppressing it, or, at least, so I would reconcile it to my morality. Know then (what never should be known), a certain lady called Mrs. Pope eloped from her husband with a Mr. Hamilton; the affair happened thus: Mr. Pope was overturned near Mr. Hamilton's house, and had his leg broken, on which Mr. Hamilton took him home, and sent for a surgeon, and Mrs. Pope to attend him. Mrs. Pope was so pleased with his hospitality, she returned all the civility in her power, and being tired of her husband, thought she could never take a better opportunity to run away, than when he was so little able to run

after her, so away she went with Mr. Hamilton, leaving her consort in possession of her gallant's house. Where they are gone is not known, and were I Mr. Pope, I should never enquire. I am sorry for the woman, as her beauty has been her ruin. She is extremely handsome and foolish; her vanity ruined her circumstances; and pride, poverty, and beauty, are ill advisers, ill suited to conduct safely through a world like this, where the temptations from without are sufficient dangers, unaided by the seducers within the mind. I shall be glad of a line from my cousin whenever she is at leisure, for I am uneasy to hear how you go on. Mr. Ramsey was so good as to call on us, and Mr. Montagu and I went to his house, where we had the pleasure to see some admirable pictures; and then we all went to the abbey, and walked among silent wits, pacific warriors, and historians who did not tell us any lies, even for their party. The town begins to fill; Mr. Carr exhibits silks of a new taste, stuffs of a new pattern, damasks of

a new fabric, and writes letters full of mercery eloquence and rhetoric to all his customers, to put them in mind of gowns and birth-days. I had the pleasure of enjoying Lady Sandwich's company half of last week, but she returned into Huntingdonshire on Monday. If I could tell you any more news I would, as it is my rule to tell all I know; for want of invention I cannot go farther; but I want not the assistance of imagination, invention, or any thing but my most certain knowledge to affirm and declare myself dear Mrs. Boscawen's

most affectionate, and faithful

humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To Edward Montagu, Esq. her husband.

1749.

MY DEAREST,

I HAD this morning the pleasure of your letter, which was in every respect agreeable, and in none more so than your having

fixed your time for going to Sandlesford, as I shall the sooner hope to see my best and dearest friend here. I can as yet give little account of the place; we staid at Lady Talbot's house till last night; this morning we drank the waters, and then went airing in Lady Sandwich's post chaise. The country here is wild and romantic, and we have a charming view from our windows; our lodgings are the best in the place, and we have a very large garden belonging to them, that we taste the rural pleasures in great perfection. As to the joys of society, and diversions of the public rooms, we can yet say nothing, for we have not yet been at the rooms, but propose to go this evening. I shall wish I could procure wings to bring me to you on the terrace at Sandlesford, where I have passed so many happy hours in the conversation of the best of companions and kindest of friends, and I hope you will there recollect one who followed your steps as constantly as your shadow; I am still following them, for there are few moments in

which my thoughts are not employed on you, and ever in the tenderest and most faithful manner. I am glad you were not displeased at my sending for the chariot; you may indeed truly say you are always willing I should enjoy what you possess; a temper that has made me happier in the share of a moderate fortune than another turn would have done with an immense one; it has endeared every pleasure, and heightened all my obligations, and will ever secure you the utmost gratitude and most sincere acknowledgments. I am glad the Captain goes with you, and hope you will have fine weather, and all that can make your journey pleasant. The charms of Sandleford are strongly in my remembrance, and I hope will delight you, but still I would have you find they want your little friend. Jack writes me word he is well. Adieu for the present; I have as yet had little leisure, being only since twelve last night in our own house; but I hope by another post to write a longer letter; this would be long indeed,

were I to say how much, and how often, I
wish to see you, and how sincerely I am

your's,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Tunbridge Wells, 1749.

MY DEAREST,

MAY this find you in perfect health, enjoying the quiet, but delicate pleasures of the country ! I am now sitting opposite to a view not unlike that from your terrace at Sandleford. Tunbridge, though it contains persons of high rank and distinction, does not, from its buildings, make a more superb figure than Newtown ; small houses irregularly placed, with trees intermixed, appear rural and romantic, and though the inhabitants of these little edifices may not condescend to own that, as the song says,

To folks in a cottage contentment is wealth !

I fear few of them are possessed of any thing better. Half of us come here to cure the bodily evils occasioned by laziness; the other half to remedy the mental disease of idleness and inoccupation, called l'ennui; heavy fines raised on wealth and rank, which impartial nature levies on her elder sons, while her laborious younger children neither groan with bodily pain, nor sigh with imaginary dissatisfaction. I imagine the industrious bee has a better relish to the honey it makes than the drone to that it seizes; though we, who are the drones of the world, are apt to think otherwise, and to pity the labour of their pursuits, and the domestic cares of the cell; but what have bees and moral reflections to do in a letter? So, first, I must ask pardon if I have made my correspondent yawn, (a common effect of serious and sad reflections out of place,) and then proceed to what concerns me more. When may I hope to see my best and dearest friend here? Mrs. Isted tells me she heard you got safe to Reading. I flatter myself the Captain will think Berkshire not inferior

to Surry, especially if he bestrides his Arabian steed, and surveys the prospects from Newbury Wash, Greenham, &c. When he is tired of mere cows and sheep, and would behold some of those fair creatures, Father Philip's geese, here are some as fair as swans and as gentle as can be desired, and I hope he will take a trip to Tunbridge. Though the ladies here have not the pretty little feet of the Chinese, and have the power of running fast, they make no ill use of the privilege, and will not cruelly fly from their admirers. I was much shocked at the melancholy death of poor Mr. Ereskine; I am afraid it will give great concern to my brothers Matt and Morris; Lord Powis mentioned it yesterday morning, which was the first I had heard of it. Sir Ralph Millbank is here with a great retinue; I have not yet seen them, for we never go to the walks but in the morning to drink the waters. I should have wrote you a long letter to-day, but Lady Talbot came in and prevented me. Lady Sandwich

seems still to think of going to Huntingdon races, which is a great concern to me, for she is the most agreeable person to live with imaginable; and we have settled ourselves together in a manner quite easy and convenient to us both. Mr. Joys is going to London to-day, and I hope will bring down Master Montagu with him. We are going to see an old castle to-day which belonged to an ancestor of yours, according to the Duke of Montagu's pedigree, which grows as near Adam as a genealogist can carry it, and they have marvellous methods of piercing the darkness of antiquity, of which I have an excellent evidence before my eyes in the pedigree of Lord ———, which hangs over the chimney. I desire my love to Mrs. Isted, whom I will epistolize by the next post. My best love attends the Captain. Every tender wish, and grateful thought, waits on you, and may you ever as kindly accept the only gift in my power, the faithful love and sincere affection, of your most grateful, and obedient wife,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Rev. Mr. Freind.

Tunbridge Wells, 1749.

SIR,

To excuse my silence I must give you an account of where I have been, and how employed; and when you find that I have been drinking Tunbridge waters you will less wonder I have not wrote, an employment judged improper here, as it is apt to make the waters get into the head, where they have an effect very unlike Helicon; and, instead of a docte et sainte ivresse, give one a giddiness and an intoxication that is accompanied with a strange kind of stupidity. I came here earlier in the season than I had proposed, on purpose to enjoy the company of Lady Sandwich, who could not stay here after the races at Huntingdon began. We were here three weeks in great happiness and tranquillity; the place was thin of company, but I wanted none while I had her's; we drank the waters, and walked, in the morning; in the evening we went

out together in a post-chaise.* Her conversation has every ornament and charm, her temper is even and amiable, her behaviour owes its constant politeness to a delicacy of morals; think how happy such a friend must make me! Two days before that fixed for her departure, she was alarmed by a gentleman's telling her Lord Sandwich was very ill of a fever, but that expecting her so soon in town he would not frighten her by a message: this gave her the utmost uneasiness, and she came home and ordered her post-chaise to be ready immediately. I did not leave her in such distress, but got into it with her, and we reached London in little more than four hours. We had the satisfaction of finding Lord Sandwich very well, that he had indeed been for a few hours extremely ill, but the bark had entirely cured him. I was very angry with the teller of this woeful tale for depriving me of my friend's company here, and giving her so much uneasiness; as I had left Mr. Montagu at Tunbridge,

* Post-chaises were then newly invented by Jethro Tull.

who had arrived here but the day before, I staid only one night in London, and the next day returned in my own post-chaise, with the same expedition, as I had gone. I brought Mrs. Medows down with me, who staid here a week; as she had never seen the place I prevailed on her to take that opportunity of making it a visit. To my great mortification Mr. Montagu was sent for to London on being left an executor to the Duke of Montagu's will; the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire are so also: and they have not yet come to any determination what is to be done, and Mr. Montagu is waiting in town for the conclusion of this business. I think, having said much of myself, I should now give you some account of the company here: we have the Dutchess of Bedford, Lord and Lady Fitzwalter, and Lady Ancram, Lady Anson, Lord and Lady Elibank, dowager Lady Barrington, Lady Betty Germain, Lord and Lady Vere Beauclerk, Lady Talbot, Lord March, and Lord Eglinton; Lord Granby and Lord Powis are just

gone away, as is the Dutchess of Somerset and her daughters; Lady Winchelsea, Mr. Edward Finch and Mrs. Finch, Mr. Vane and Mrs. Hope, Lady Lucy and Col. Howard are here; Mr. and Mrs. Ellis arrived last night; besides these we have several people of fashion, and of Jews a great and mighty tribe. Within this week we have had a great number of people, but for the most part they rather have added to the number than to the dignity of our company. I was sorry the Dutchess of Somerset left us; her behaviour was so obliging and so proper, I thought her a good example for persons of great rank; it is surprizing that the princely state, and princely pride, she had been so long used to, should have left her such an easiness of manners; she seemed to say and do what was civil without the intention of being gracious. Lady Frances Seymour* is very handsome, Lady Charlotte† is not so, but more agreeable than her sister by an unaffected

* Afterwards married to Lord Granby.

† Afterwards married to Lord Aylesford.

good humour. In many respects this place is inferior to the Bath, in some it is better. We are not confined here in streets; the houses are scattered irregularly, and Tunbridge Wells looks, from the window I now sit by, a little like the village you see from our terrace at Sandford, only that the inhabitants, instead of Jack and Joan, are my Lord and Lady. The edifices they inhabit are not much greater, nor perhaps is there more pleasure or content among the great and rich who have bad nerves, than with the healthful and laborious peasant. The slow and consuming disease called *l'ennui* is not known among the industrious, and though, as fortune's elder children, we are best portioned, I know not whether we are most beloved; I hope not; as Providence made the system for the multitude I believe the life that the generality of the world must lead, is most happy. But, say you, the liberal education, the acquaintance with the Muses, the familiarity with the Graces; can they have had it? No, my friend, but remem-

ber what Mr. Pope says of that portion of knowledge we call wisdom.

'Tis but to know, how little can be known,
To see all others' wants, and feel our own.

The Muses are too critical, and the Graces too delicate, for common life; poor ladies! how they would be tired of the public rooms at Tunbridge. Those who would grow fat in this world should rather wish for a good appetite than an exquisite taste; ordinary conversation is an insipid, and business a gross food, so the generality of beaux-esprits are in the vapours; then, for those who are always seeking amusements they find it a painful search; of this we have had a late instance in regard to our masquerades; people in town had met one another so often at assemblies, &c. they hated each others faces, and we had masquerades of great expense and shew; these tired too, and we wanted to be transported to another country. A Venetian masquerade was thought of; it was called a jubilee; and a boat was surnamed a gondola, and all

people were transported; a jubilee at Ranelagh, and a gondola on the canal! Oh rare! The conductor of this noble amusement repeats the diversion; all people were tired. Thus has it happened in furniture; sick of Grecian elegance and symmetry, or Gothic grandeur and magnificence, we must all seek the barbarous gaudy goût of the Chinese; and fat-headed Pagods, and shaking Mandarins, bear the prize from the finest works of antiquity; and Apollo and Venus must give way to a fat idol with a scone on his head. You will wonder I should condemn the taste I have complied with, but in trifles I shall always conform to the fashion. I may go to the jubilee masquerade; or furnish my room with a Turkey carpet, without turning Papist or Mahometan. But to return from whence my digression has brought me; I own in this place I observe people's chief malady is of the spirits; ask them what they ail, and they say nothing enlivens or pleases them.—For my part, when I have health, I think myself happy, but it is

not from the amusements I meet with, but from the sunshine of the heart, from something I cannot account for; but it is better than what reason and reflection does for others. May you ever be chearful and happy from some reason; either from natural spirits or reflection. You are engaged in laudable pursuits, and happy in a worthy and amiable family, and from thence you will find a constant serenity and content. While you preach the duties of content and thankfulness to your parish, you teach yourself the lesson; an attention to them keeps you employed, and the great enemy of human nature is idleness, and the bane of reason is dissipation; all which a pleasurable life would have engaged you in. After all this fine morality I must dress for the ball. I live in too much hurry, though I have got a house almost a mile from the Wells, and have a comfortable dwelling, and a pretty garden. My only neighbour is Lady Talbot, and she is a very agreeable one; as I have a coach with me I think myself best situated here, as I have

some hours every day of retirement,
and endeavour to think myself in the
country.

I am, Sir,
your most obliged humble servant,
and sincere friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To Miss Anstey.

Sandleford, 21st December, 1750.

MY DEAR MISS ANSTEY,

YOUR letter came to my hands during
the few days I staid in town to take leave
of my brother, who is gone to China ; as
I was then embarrassed with business, and
divers engagements, I proposed writing
to you as soon as I got to my peaceful
habitation at Sandleford ; but on the road
I acquired so bad a cold I could hardly
see to read or write, and am but just in
a capacity to do either at present. Mrs.
Medows came to us the day after we

came here, and spent a week with us; she went yesterday to Sir Philip Meadows's, at Chute Park. A little before I went to London I lost my very good neighbour the Dutchess of Chandos; a stroke of the palsy carried her off in a few days; her bodily pains were great, but her mind felt the serenity that gilds the evening of a virtuous life; she quitted the world with that decent farewell which people take of it, who rather consider it as a place in which they are to impart good than to enjoy it; her character has made a great impression on me, as I think her a rare instance that age could not make conceited and stiff, nor retirement discontented, nor virtue inflexible and severe: these faults we pardon, and as so often following such circumstances, we look on them as cause and effect joined in almost inseparable union; but there are happy natures which acknowledge no such tie and dependance, and these only have a right to the respect from age and virtue; others should be contented if we balance as

equally our praise and censure as they do their virtue and vice; and to a negative character do negative honour. I found the town empty, and, in regard to public diversions, dull. I suppose the new pamphlets come down to Cambridge; there is one styled an Occasional Letter, which has the marks of a great hand; it is political, addressed to Mr. Pelham on the late disputes of the ministry; it is so much in the style of Lord Bolingbroke one can hardly doubt its being his, though he does not own it. There is a pamphlet which amuses me, (by a lady,) addressed to Mrs. Con. Philips, and designed as an answer to her letter to Lord Chesterfield; it is written with some spirit and argument, but it has the female frailty of displaying more learning than is necessary or graceful; and the fair one has read *Clarissa* till she has acquired something of the *Precieuse*, and has spoiled her style by an imitation of Mr. Richardson. When your booksellers get the King of Prussia's *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Bran-*

denbourg, I recommend them to your reading ; besides the remarkable circumstance of being written by a King, they are really very entertaining ; he is an author of spirit, less timid, and more decisive than the humble pedant in his studious cell ; he writes en roi ; his happy confidence diverts me, and I love to see the royal prerogative extending to politics, physics, and morality ; and, to say the truth, the polishing of some of our European neighbours, within the last century, from barbarity to humanity, is amusing, and gives one a true idea of what our allies the Germans were and are. I mentioned to you the letter written with reference to Sully's Memoires ; the Memoires themselves are universally read and commended, and contain the history of the greatest king by the wisest minister. This gloomy season of the year, when nature's beauties fade, turns our thoughts to the animal of all seasons, man ; what he is doing, or has done, must engross our present attention ; the vegetable and

brute creation having withdrawn themselves from our observation, and, I imagine, you have not commerce enough with the living to engross all your time or amuse every hour, so I am leading you to the laurelled tombs of deceased heroes. I was much entertained with your account of the civil wars of Cambridge. I imagine the dispute will be the more lasting in proportion to the frivolousness of the difference; for, to the honour of my own species do I speak it, they contend for nothing so violently as forms, nor dispute for any thing so obstinately as words. I am afraid the Muses will abdicate their seat; if they find the discord so loud their sweet and harmonious voices cannot be heard; for all ladies, even Parnassian dames, desire attention. I shall be infinitely obliged to my dear Miss Anstey if she will endeavour to get a quarter of a pound of saffron for Lady Sandwich, and send it to her by the first opportunity, and please to let me know what it costs. I ask pardon for giving you this trouble, but she is very fond of

it, and cannot get any that is good. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments. I beg mine to the dear Mrs. Anstey and your brother. I shall stay here till the meeting of the Parliament. A letter from my friend will enliven my retirement.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate friend, and
faithful and obliged humble servant,
E. MONTAGU.

P.S. How goes on your feather screen?
If you want grebe's, or any sort of dyed
feathers, let me know when I am in town.

To Mrs. Donnellan.

Sandleford, the 30th of December, 1750.

I SHOULD have wrote to my dear Mrs. Donnellan sooner, but that I have had a great cold, which took such entire possession of my head and eyes that it disabled

me in great measure for writing. Mr. Montagu had a cough, which began to alarm me; but, thank God, it is entirely gone off. Mrs. Medows came here the day after I arrived, and spent some days with us; so that while we had company I had not all the leisure I have at present. My situation now affords me leisure, which you busy mortals in London have no notion of. The great devoir of receiving and returning visits, the necessary resort to assemblies, the indispensable duties of seeing and being seen, reach not at such a distance from the glorious metropolis. I have hardly seen a tree or a distant hill; the fogs having hindered even my eyes from wandering abroad. I have neither been so drowsy as people who are quite idle, nor so alert as those who are absolutely busy. The polite world has no way of driving away l'ennui but by pleasure, we country gentlefolks know it may be banished by occupation. With great submission to the excellent author of *les Caracteres et Mœurs du Siecle*, one should reverse his

maxim, and rather pass one's life à faire des riens, qu'à rien faire. Do but do something, the application to it will make it appear important, and the being the doer of it laudable; so that one is sure to be pleased oneself; to please others is a task so difficult one may never attain it, and perhaps not so necessary that one is obliged to attempt it. We have a loss in not having Dr. Pocock here this Christmas, as we expected. The conversation of a man of letters, and a traveller, is very agreeable in the country. Now I am out of the sphere of attraction of the great city of London, I am as well pleased to hear of some custom at Constantinople as of a new fashion at London; and the Nile is as much in my thoughts as the Thames. In retirement one lives equally to all time, and is a citizen of the world; in society the news, the business, the company of the day, by their nearness take off the attention from great, but distant events and objects. How wisely is this ordered by Providence; for if nearness did not magnify small matters,

and distance lessen great ones, a man might be thinking of the labours of Hercules when he should be shaving his beard or cutting his nails ; or be cutting through the Alps with Hannibal when he should help himself to a slice of pudding. Is not the association of Quin and Mrs. Cibber of more importance to us than the union of the empires of the Medes and Persians ? and the rules of brag than all the institutions of Lycurgus ? But a hundred miles may be as powerful an interposition as a thousand years, and then each object is considered in its natural bulk and figure ; then ancient Rome and mighty Babylon somewhat eclipse the present state of things, and heroes dead take more of our attention than living generals, and departed lawgivers than existing ministers. How necessary sometimes to withdraw ourselves to the distance from whence we can truly judge of the worth and importance of things ! Every prudent purchaser considers the lots in an auction before the day of sale, lest the impetuosity of the bidders should

excite him to bid more for any commodity than it is worth. Riches and power may be set up at too high a price, and when we see so many bidding all their moral virtues for them, we are apt to be drawn away by example, unless armed by some previous valuation of them in our own minds. But I did not design to carry my reflections so far; you must make some allowance for my situation; it offers me nothing lively or new, it is the very blank of the year; not so much as a new-born butterfly or fresh blown rose to be met with. My rich neighbours are dull, and my poor ones are miserable. Your friend, dame Wood, is now in a miserable condition; not nursed, as Shakespear calls it, by base accommodations, she has no borrowed helps from the sheep, or the silk worm, subsists upon ætherial food, and sleeps under the canopy of heaven; indeed I never heard of such absolute wretchedness; she did not come here because she was entirely covered with the itch, so that till the other day, that beef was

given to the poor, I did not know what was become of her. She did not enter the doors, but stood coughing without, the most terrible spectacle that can be imagined; I would have sent her to Winchester hospital, but they do not receive patients that have any contagious distempers; however, Mr. Withers has begun her cure, and that of the whole family, who are in this condition. I sent to her yesterday, and she is better, and I hope will be cured of all evils but poverty, and that, I think, is too well fixed in that numerous family ever to hope it may be driven away. I shall however endeavour to prevent her from perishing, and not let this disease of poverty become mortal. I am very angry with her that she has lately introduced another heir to wretchedness and want; she has not half Hamlet's delicacies on the question, To be, or not to be? The spurns of office, and the law's delay, are very puny evils to those her offspring must endure; the world affords no law to make her rich, and yet she will encrease and multiply

over the face of the earth. The Dutchess of Chandos is greatly missed by the poor in this rigorous season. There is a family at Donnington castle who are very generous and charitable, but nothing can entirely avail in a part of the world where the manufacture decays; daily labour must give the daily bread; occasional alms, like medicine to the diseased, may alleviate sickness, but can hardly procure constant health. To make the poor happy one must make them industrious. I desire my compliments to Miss Sutton; in the country we always make them in the form of the season; if you both please to take them from me in that manner, and add whatever you wish for the next year, and a happy succession of new years days, you will only do justice to the heart of your

affectionate friend, and faithful

humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 8th of January, 1751.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH the time draws near for our meeting, I will give you more last words from Sandleford. To shew our admirable constancy with regard to the country, we shall stay the utmost time we first proposed, in spite of wind, rain, and all the horrid features of winter. When the sun darts a favourable ray I mount my palfrey and pursue health to its proper situation, the mountains. I climbed Sidmonton hills yesterday, and paid a visit to the family of the Watermans, whom I found in all the tranquillity of retired leisure, neither busied in the present affairs of the world, nor studying the transactions of ancient times, as historians and poets offer them to our view; for, from the age of the termagant Semiramis, to the reign of our gracious Queen Anne, there have been no events that can rouse the

dead sésé of solitary dullness; when once we have determined to live by ourselves and for ourselves, we have done with rational, and even animal life, and begin to vegetate apace. Since the operations of the virtuosi upon the middle species between the animal and vegetable things, I look upon these people as not in a state of security; and, to avoid the scissars of Mr. Trembley, I advise these human polypus's to look well to their animal rights and privileges, at least. But to my dear neighbours; — the good man was yawning by the fire-side, the good woman feeding her birds, and pretty miss making essence of lemon. Little awed by the importance of these occupations, I recommended a change of scene, and advised a journey to town; but how near a friend is pride to dullness! pride stepped in, animated his features with a frown, and he rejected the proposal with much disdain of the follies and vanities of a town life. How is it that dullness, laziness, and inactivity, assume honourable names, and thrust

themselves into the company of wisdom ; while lively pleasures are ever ranked in the train of folly ; as if the moment we ceased to be gay we began to be wise. Oh there is many a studious meditative interval between these degrees of discretion ! I did not stay dinner at Sidmonton, but after a short visit left them to pursue their nap, and perfect the cosmetic. As I am not quite dull enough to be proud, nor lively enough to be vain, I will own to you that some of the hours I have passed in my dressing room here might have been as profitably spent in Bartholomew fair. Solomon says wisdom crieth in the streets ; and indeed those who give no heed to her there, will hardly listen to her in all the silence of solitude. For it is rather the internal tumult of passions, than the external interruption of hurry and noise, that make us insensible to her calls and admonitions. I believe we shall set out from hence on Tuesday sen'night. I am glad to hear our roads in Hill-street are so good.* I hope I have so far improved

* Hill-street was not then paved.

my stock of health that it will serve my ordinary demands in town, and enable me to enjoy the conversation of my friends. The feather work will not be quite finished, so I shall leave a house full of artificers till it be done.

I am, dear Madam,
your most affectionate and faithful,
E. MONTAGU.

These letters are intended to convey in them the biography of the writer, which the Editor thinks he could not so well exemplify by any remarks of his own, as by the letters themselves. He regrets, in this point of view, that he has neglected hitherto to insert any of Mrs. Montagu's letters to her husband. When the first two volumes were published, her letters to Mr. Montagu, which are very numerous, were still unsorted. The circumstance of their being without dates (excepting by the post-mark of the day of the month, without the date of the year), deterred the Editor from the labour of the arrangement. He has since placed them in order, principally by means of reference to the letters written to her by Mr. Montagu. From this period he will insert a selection of them, because they contain many anecdotes, public and private, and exhibit the course and tenor of the life and disposition of the writer.

To Edward Montagu, Esq. her husband.

Hill-street, the 4th of January, 1751.

MY DEAREST,

I HOPE the leisure of your retirement gives you time to think of me, and to wish our meeting; the bustle of London does not exclude you from my thoughts, nor prevent my wishing continually for your company. Lady Sandwich's spirits were a good deal revived by my coming to her, and she is very thankful to you for giving me leave to do it. You may suppose, as she was my sole temptation to come, she is my sole engagement here. I have not seen the face of any person else except my sister, who was with me yesterday morning. Lord Sandwich is in town. It is said the King's concern for the Queen of Denmark has hurt his health, and that he looks miserably. There is a report that the Princess of Hesse is in a consumption. The King, to oblige the weavers, has declared the mourning shall

last only three months. I cannot hear any public news, except that the Parliament will meet on the seventh of this month, that his Majesty may early repair to that land flowing with milk and honey, called Hanover. Lord and Lady Cardigan are still abroad. My father has reassumed his creative pencil, and I hope will finish the pretty landscape he began for us. Let me hear from you as often as you can spare time, and see you as soon as you can persuade yourself to quit that retirement and leisure you love, and are better able to fill with wise and noble pursuits than most people; but remember here is one who wishes to see you, and is with the most faithful and tender affection,

Your's,

E. MONTAGU,

To the Same.

Hill-street, January 7, 1751.

MY DEAREST,

I AM glad you are so far tired of your monastic life, as to think of returning to the secular state of a husband and member of parliament. I believe our predecessors in the cowl had their particular kinds of volupté, which silence, secrecy, and peace might much enhance and recommend ; but to those who have been used to the bustle and business of life, such pleasures want vivacity. Boileau makes a man who goes to visit the chantre just before dinner, observe the luxury of a prebendal table ; says he,

Il voit la nappe mise,
Admire le bel ordre, et reconnoit l'église.

I have sat so constantly in Lady Sandwich's chimney corner, I can give you little account of the world. It is said Lord Harcourt, Lord Lincoln, and Prince

Edward, are to have the Garter: *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. There was a report that the Archbishop of Canterbury was going to be married to Mrs. Clark and her eight children; but Archbishops now a-days do not mortify the flesh at that rate; and I hear she owns with a sigh that the report is groundless. I hear Lord Bolingbroke has left two folios of metaphysics, a history of his own times, and divers other tracts; they are bequeathed to Mallet; but Will. Chetwynd and the other executors do not care to give them up. His estate was entailed. He has given four hundred pounds in legacies to his servants; but it is doubted whether those legacies, and that of his library, will stand good, as he may be more in debt than his cash will answer: and this is made a pretence for withholding the manuscripts assigned to Mallet; though I do not see that any creditors can claim a man's works: I never heard that any part of Parnassus was mortgaged. I shall be very glad when your business is finished, as I shall then hope to see you

here ; you have too many virtues for the contracted life of a monk, and, I thank my stars, are bound in another vow, one more fit for you, as it is social and not selfish. Adieu, my dearest, remember I long to see you,

And am entirely your's,

E. M.

*To Mrs. Montagu, from Mrs. West, wife of
Gilbert West.*

Wickham, March 5, 1751.

DEAR MADAM,

THE pleasure I receive from your letters convinces me public fame sometimes speaks truth, as I am sure it did when I was told Mrs. Montagu was the most agreeable correspondent in the world. As long as I enjoy that pleasure, I shall be less anxious about the remains of Madam de Sevigné's letters, though I have a great esteem and regard for her memory,

and have often wished I had lived with her aux rochers, nay sometimes have attended her, dans ses bois, entre chiens et loups. I never liked Madame de Grignan, she seems to me an affected pedant in petticoats, and too fond of pere Descartes. The account you give of her being so little concerned for the loss of so good a mother, convinces me she was good for nothing, and confirms me in the belief of the story, that she had an affair with her husband's brother, the Chevalier. Perhaps you may think it high time to say something of your cousin,* after all the kind and obliging things you have said of him; but before I proceed, pray, madam, why may not I have the honour of being your cousin as well as he? I assure you I will not cousin you till you cousin me; so begin as soon as you please. Well! now to your cousin again: he desires his best and kindest compliments to you, and fears he shall not be able to wait

* The Editor cannot recollect the origin of Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Gilbert West calling each other cousins; they were not related.

on you next week, as both his hands are very lame,* and he cannot walk without the help of them; he can but just feed himself, and play at cards; one of his ancles has had a visit, but I hope he will not have any more this time; and I flatter myself it is all over for this bout, though I always say this with fear and dread, lest I should be mistaken. If the weather should be soft and mild, I propose he shall set forth next Sunday, in the chariot, as the horse is well, and the air and exercise will do him good. Now, dear madam, give me leave to say something about your health: we are much concerned you have been ill, and have still a cough; I fear you caught cold here, and after puzzling my brains how you got it, am sure I hit upon it at last; you were prancing out in the morning before I was up, and then out again with the petit marquis;† and though it was fine over

* Mr. West's sufferings from the gout are well known. See his poem of the Triumphs of the Gout, translated from the Greek of Lucian.

† Berenger, author of the History of Horsemanship.

head, it was too damp and cold for a town lady. Now as you got your cold here, it is right you should leave it here; therefore take my advice and come down and see your cousin, and the change of air, and the asses milk will do. Put on ten clokes and josephs; as for flys and shades they will keep out the dust, but not the cold; so leave them. I am sure this advice will do you good, and it will be of infinite benefit to your cousin, and a vast pleasure to me. Mr. Montagu should insist upon your coming; but I know he had rather keep you with him; but for your good he should part with you; if he will not he may come with you, which will be still a greater pleasure to us, and by way of bribe I will give him some more pork, as I find he likes it. What can I do more to tempt him? I can't get Lady S——b; that would do; besides, as you say you have got the house, you should come down and see it. I am uneasy you have not seen it, least you should not like it; I don't like to choose a house or a husband for any body; besides, as Tubby and

I both were in earnest when we said you would be always welcome here, why would you not come and see it before you took it? we were both delighted with the account you give of the visit you had from the petit marquis; and I think I see him hopping about from chair to chair, as I always think he is like a pert cock-sparrow hopping upon the grass plot; he is a little man but a great beast; he took Tubby's canto, and was to talk to Burges about my dear boy's inoculation, and we have never heard a word from him since; I suppose he is taken up with the pleasures of the town. I hear he was coquetting with Mrs. Garrick in her box, and seemed very happy; so he thinks no more of his friends here: pray if you see him, reprimand him for it. This was to have come two days ago; but I could never get time to finish it, as reading and other avocations take up my time, and I never begin writing till almost midnight. It would have been better for dear Mrs. Montagu that I had gone to bed, than have troubled her with such a heap of

inconsistent stuff, but to those I love, my pen is as apt to gallop as my tongue, so this must be my excuse for taking up so much of your time, that would be better spent. The messenger that brings this is another cousin, but unlike the sparrow, and more like a stork, it is Mr. Lyttleton's brother that lives with him ;* he desired he might keep the letter, that he might deliver it himself into your fair hands. Mr. West desires his love to his sweet cousin. Remember my advice, and come away ; good night, dear Madam.

I am,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

CATHERINE WEST.

(Saturday night past twelve.)

* Afterwards Lord Westcote.

To her Sister.

8th of May, 1751.

I AM ashamed that I have been so remiss in writing to my dear Sister, but business and amusements have poured in torrents upon me. I was some days preparing for the subscription masquerade, where I was to appear in the character of the Queen Mother, my dress white satin, with fine new point for tuckers, kerchief, and ruffles, pearl necklace, and ear rings, and pearls and diamonds on the head, and my hair curled after the Vandyke picture. Mrs. Trevor and the Lady Stanhopes adjusted my dress, so that I was one day in my life well dressed. Miss Charlotte Fane was Ruben's wife, and looked extremely well; we went together. Miss Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable; she was Iphigenia for the sacrifice, but so naked, the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim. The maids of honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended they would not speak to her—

Pretty Mrs. Pitt* looked as if she came from heaven, but was only on her road thither in the habit of a chanoiness. Many ladies looked handsome, and others rich; there was as great a quantity of diamonds as the town could produce. Mrs. Chandler was a starry night. The Dutchess of Portland had no jewels. Lord Sandwich made a fine hussar. Mr. Montagu has made me lay by my dress to be painted in, when I see Mr. Hoare again. His picture is thought like, but too full for my thin jaws. I staid till five o'clock in the morning at the masquerade, and was not tired. I have never been quite well since, but I had better luck than Miss Conway, who was killed by a draught of lemonade she drank there. I suppose you have heard of Lord Bolinbroke's new work; as it is short, we idle one's in London can find time to peruse it.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

E. M.

* Afterwards Lady Rivers.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Tunbridge, 30th August, 1751

MY DEAREST,

THE application with which you have followed your business in the north, is a most agreeable proof of your desire to return. I am drinking the waters very successfully. As to pleasure, it does not abound in the public rooms. Crowds are generally gay, but there is a want of spirits in our company, which I imagine to be owing to the frequency of assemblies, and the general dissipation of the present life. When the country lady came hither from domestic cares and attendance on her dairy and hen-roost, and her cherry cheek'd daughter from plain work and pastry, the mechanic's wife from attendance on her shop and accounts, Tunbridge was a place of recreation, but now the squire's lady comes from whisk in assemblies, miss from Ranelagh, and the bonne bourgeoise from

Marybone Gardens; it is but the same scene on another stage. An old French historian, speaking of the behaviour of the English after a victory, says, " Les Anglois, selon leur coutume, se divertissoient moult tristement;" if such be their humour that they can divert themselves but *tristement* after danger and labour overcome, and an advantage gained, how *triste* must their amusements be, when pursued to the neglect of many advantages, and without the contrast of intervals of business and application! Our airy neighbours, the French, have a sort of animal spirits, which enable them to frisk about the fields of joy; English John Trot can go far on a reasonable errand, but he wants the *légereté* that is necessary to tread the fantastic round of pleasure. The Dutchess of Norfolk being indisposed to-day, talks of leaving the place, though she has not drank the water a week. The Dutchess of Newcastle is coming to this place very ill; I believe the unhappy state of public affairs makes her so. "Ambition should be made of

“sterner stuff.” The wife of a first minister should not have weak nerves. She is very fond of her husband, and he has great confidence in her, and trusts her with all his cares and solitudes; a very heavy charge, I should think. As to poor Mrs. Percival, I hailed her voyage to the realms of rest; but for poor Shaw, he might have lived, and laughed, and talked of the deluge, and collected cockle-shells many years longer. The death of those we esteem afflicts us; we are shocked at the death of those we have laughed at, and laughed with, as we never looked upon them in so serious a light, as to suppose so sad an event could happen to them. I would deck his tomb with emblems of all the wonders of the land and deep; crocodiles should weep and tigers howl; every shell should become vocal; sea weed should bloom immortal on his tomb, and moss, though petrified, lie lightly on his breast. What signify voyages? what signifies learning? Hebrew Professor! Traveller to Memphis! sole witness living of the pre-

sent state of the Ptolomies ! Must all these glories sink into oblivion ? How gloriously had he been interred had he died in the perilous pass of the pyramids, and succeeded Mark Antony in the bed of Cleopatra ! I hope the poor man will have the satisfaction of being embalmed in the true Egyptian manner, for the more like a mummy his body be made, the more it will joy his gentle ghost. The ladies here are all sighing and languishing for my father's company. His friend, Mr. Trevor, shone out one day in a fine gold coat, and has not been seen since. I am tired of the place, and should have a much worse time of it, if it were not for my cheerful friends.* We borrow our evening's amusement from books. I have but a slight acquaintance with the Muses, but have love enough for them, never to be unhappy in their company. Though the education of women is always too frivolous, I am glad mine had such a qualification of the

* Mr. Gilbert West, his wife, and his son, who were in the house with her.

serious, as to fit me for the relish of the *belles bagatelles*. You are now in a place very different from this, where all people are engaged in business, and in the pursuit of riches. Their children will come to Tunbridge, for the caterpillar no sooner gets gaudy wings, than he forgets his creeping life, and idly sports in the sunshine of the world. I should be well pleased with a sight of Newcastle.* Riches drawn from the bowels of the earth, or gained by commerce, where exchange is still a mutual benefit, present agreeable views of the arts and policy of mankind. Though the coldness of our climate may set coals in a favourable light, I shall be glad to see as many of them turned to the precious metal as possible. I have not enough of the miser, to love treasures hidden and buried. Money is convertible to credit and pleasure; useful in the hands of the prudent; noble in the hands of the generous; pernicious with the

* Mr. Montagu was then visiting the estates of his relation, Mr. Rogers, a lunatic, of whom he was the Committee, and from whom he afterwards inherited them.

bad; ridiculous with the prodigal, and contemptible with the miser. I have a very good opinion of Mr. Montagu and his wife. I like the prospect of these golden showers, and so I congratulate you upon them, but most of all, I congratulate you upon the disposition of mind which made you put the account of them in a postscript. Were we to make petitions to fate, we should put riches in the postscript; by no means forget them quite.

I am, my dearest, ever your's,

E. M.

To the Same.

Tunbridge, September, 1751.

MY DEAREST,

THIS place continues to encrease in company. We have crowds, and very little amusement; and foreigners, and very little variety. The Duke of Newcastle

was at a ball last night, given by Mr. Connor, to the politest part of the company. The busy statesman was written on his brow; he whispered to the foreign ministers with all the seriousness of a negociator, though I verily believe he was only talking of Lewes races. Sir Thomas Robinson was no less embarrassed with the business of doing the honours to the secretary of state, than the secretary of state with doing the business of the nation. There are some reflections and characters in *La Bruyere*, which would have fitted them both, but far be it from me to quote them in a letter to travel by the post. We expect those goddesses, the Gunnings; and Sir Thomas Robinson, after being master of the ceremonies to the French ambassador, and our secretary of state, proposes to be gallant to these fair dames. My father is very gay. Sir William Brown starts many arguments for his amusement. Mr. West reads to us in an evening, and the wit of the last age supplies us, when we do not meet with any

in this. I suppose my brother Robinson is by this time returning to the known world ; I expect to hear that he has travelled to the extremity of Scotland, for he is a man of infinite curiosity, and would have “ knowledge at no entrance “ quite shut out ;” those things he cannot examine by question, he will examine by view.* Discontents among the ministers are still rumoured ; what will happen from the long threatened storm among them I know not, but I believe the loss or benefit will be confined to a few individuals, and relate but little to the general good. If I were to measure your stay at Newcastle, by my regret at your absence, I should think you had spent much time there ; but considered by the business you have dispatched, my reason confesses the haste you have made. To your prayer that we may not again be so long separated, I can with much zealous fervour say amen. I shall rejoice to see little Sandleford again, and in your

* Her elder brother attended Lord Sandwich to Aix la Chapelle in 1748, at the negotiation of the peace.

company to enjoy the best blessing, golden leisure, which the busy ills of life have taught me to esteem. When one is very young and full of the hopes of inexperience, one looks forward from pleasure to pleasure; a few years more make us see tranquillity with as great eagerness. I can even bid the "mute silence hist along," and love the negative pleasures of solitude. Wisdom, we are told, cries in the streets, but folly, ever great in noise, cries louder. Young Wortley is gone to France with Miss Ash. He is certainly a gentleman of infinite vivacity, but methinks he might as well have deferred this exploit till the death of his father. M——'s friend, Miss G——, made me a visit yesterday; would you believe it? If Paris had been here to give a crab to the ugliest, worst shaped woman at Tunbridge, she would have borne away the acid apple: it is absolutely true. I compared her to hundreds, she was the foulest: I measured her with hundreds, she was the most crooked. If the god of riches does not favour M—— for this

enthusiasm, he is an ungrateful deity. To pass through fire to Moloch, is a sacrifice of less horror, than to pass through deformity to wedlock. May health and pleasure attend you ; I shall be glad when they travel with you towards London ; the first you will find has been my companion, the other you will bring with you to me.

I am, my dearest,

Your most faithful and affectionate wife,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Heys, September 30, 1751:

I CAME hither this morning to enjoy the quiet, leisure, exercise, and air, one cannot have in London. I am so well in health, that I do not know myself, and I think I am a little like the humourous

Lieutenant, that would run no hazards while he was well, though he was prodigal of life, when he had a pain in his side. I am very desirous to preserve this comfortable state of health, and also my plump and jolly condition. My face is no longer a memento mori. I look like one of the goddess Hebe's elder sisters, not ever fair and young, but not so wan and decayed as of late. I met Mr. Marriot this morning, on his way from Tunbridge: he travelled with less parade than last year; no empty bottles to signify there had been wine; no hoop petticoat to shew his society complete; no boy that appeared by the shortness of his habit, to be of his clothing. He was travelling in a common post chaise, at the expence of fourpence halfpenny a mile, the other half being paid by his companion. Marriot's muse, though she has long been hoarse, is not yet dumb. He rhymed on every subject, from the tall Lady Lincoln, to misses no taller than mushrooms. As Solomon valued himself that he could reason on all plants,

from the cedar to the hyssop, so does Marriot, that he can sing of all nymphs, from the Brobdignaggian to the Lilliputian fair. I thank you for taking constant exercise on horseback. I will do all in my power to keep with me the lovely stranger, health.

I am, my dearest,
most faithfully and affectionately yours,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

London, Oct. 31st, 1751.

DEAR COUSIN,

THE great offenders of our days, of both sexes, have been very fond of writing their apologies; for my part, I had rather employ my pen on any subject, than one so delicate and tender as my own transgressions or omissions; so I am glad that I can now tell you the principal commissions I was charged with, are duly executed. Mr. Linnell told me yesterday,


that he was going to send your chimney-piece by the carrier : I hope it will please you ; it can indeed make but a very inconsiderable ornament to a fireside, where the social virtues always sit : in London we poorly supply their place in our chimney corners, by marble bosoms without hearts, and finely sculptured heads without brains ; however, I am far from thinking the cherubs on my chimney-piece the worst tête à tête in town ; they have lost nothing of their native firmness by being highly polished, nor of their purity by being in the fine world. I was very sorry to hear you had been threatened with the gout. I hope you will hear no more of a distemper that could subdue any patience but yours, a trophy you have never added to "the triumphs of the gout." Poor Dr. Courayer notified to me that he was ill of a sore throat, and could not come to visit me, though he wanted to see me ; to make this matter easy, I went to him : I was obliged to pass through all the gay vanities of Mrs. Chenevix, and then ascend a most steep

and difficult staircase, to get at the little philosopher; this way to wisdom through the vanities and splendid toys of the world, might be prettily allegorized by the pen of the great Bunyan, and the good man himself; to an emblemizing genius, would have afforded an ample subject: his head was enfoncée in a cap of the warmest beaver, made still more respectable by a gold orris; "a wonderous hieroglyphic robe he wore,"* in which was pourtrayed all the attributes of the god Fo, with the arms and achievements of the cham of Tartary. Never did Christian doctor wear such a pagan appearance; one would have imagined he had been sent hither from Tonquin, to propagate idolatrous worship. When I ceased to look upon him as a missionary, I began to consider him as the best piece of Chinese furniture I had ever seen, and could hardly forbear offering him a place on my chimney-piece; he asked much after your health, and with so much regard, I am convinced he is still a good

* A chintz dressing gown.

Christian at heart, though his habit ^{is} heathenish. The town is much amused with the story of the disastrous adventure of our cousin, Wortley Montagu, jun., and the famous Mr. Taaffe, at Paris: these gentlemen are both sent to Fort l'Eveque, and from thence may possibly be transferred to the gallies, for having played with a jew at Pharon, with too much finesse; finesse is a pretty improvement in modern life, and modern language; it is something people may do without being hanged, and speak of without being challenged; it is a point just beyond fair skill, and just short of downright knavery; but as the medium is ever hard to hit, the very professors of finesse do sometimes deviate into paths that lead to prisons and the gallies, and such is the case of these unhappy heroes. The Speaker of the House of Commons will be grieved to see two illustrious senators chained at the ignoble oar. The King of France has been applied to, but he says he does not interpose in private matters; so how it will go with them no one can tell:

in the meantime, poor Miss Ash weeps like the forsaken Ariadne on a foreign shore. There has been a terrible fracas in the court of the grand monarque; the people, generally credulous, have strangely taken it into their heads, that the Duke of Burgundy is not legitimate, and instead of acclamations and huzzas, murmurs and sighs have echoed through the streets, on the days the feasts were made for the birth of this child; besides this, there was conveyed into the cradle some gunpowder and a match, with an epigram, expressing that they would serve to blow up the pretended Duke of Burgundy. Upon his Majesty's hearing this, the gouvernante, sub-gouvernante, women of the bed-chamber, even to the toothless pap-tasters, were all sent to the Bastille; one of the women, who said she saw a hand reach over a screen to throw a paper into the cradle, is since dead. A little knowledge is allowed to be a dangerous thing; had the lady been able to have informed his Majesty at once who threw the paper, she had been safe, but it is supposed the hand that threw it, lest



she should discover more, gave her a dose that has silenced her for ever. There is a piece come out, by King Stanislaus, to prove mankind receive more prejudice than benefit from arts and sciences; this is answered by a citizen, I think, of Genoa.* For my part, I will read the royal writer; I always imagined a diadem the best charm against thinking, but his Majesty of Prussia, and King Stanislaus dare reason, and boldly too. It is strange though, that kings should talk of the mischiefs of arts and sciences, when they, good creatures, enjoy all the comforts and luxuries they procure, without the trouble of attaining any. The Duke and Dutchess of Portland, and Lord Titchfield dined with us to day, and staid till eight o'clock; her Grace enquired after you. I said I should write to you if my head would give me leave, (which by the bye aches intolerably), she desired her compliments. Mr. Montagu desires his compliments to you, Mrs. West, and your

* "Rousseau's work, sur la Question si le retablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs."

son ; mine attend both my amiable and well beloved cousins ; I hope one of them drinks Spa water, and the other Helicon.

I am, Sir,

Your most affectionate cousin, and
obliged, and faithful humble Servant,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 17th of Dec. 1751.

My good cousin was so obliging as to desire to hear from me as soon as I was settled at Sandleford, but ill as I am at present, I should not trouble him with a letter, if I did not earnestly desire to hear of his health.* I had flattered myself you would pass the winter without any complaint, and that health would make

* Mr. West and Mrs. Montagu being both invalids, their letters, especially Mr. West's, are too much filled with mutual enquiries on the subject of health.

you amends for the time my cousin and you sacrificed to me at Tunbridge. I should be very ungrateful, if I did not wish you a temporary benefit, from what I hope will prove for me a lasting advantage :* this authorises me to say, that if you measure my concern for your welfare, by the obligations I have to you, you will excuse my giving you the trouble to inform me of your state of health, and also of Mrs. West's, who seemed recovering her happy and agreeable spirits, if your indisposition has not again depressed them; and all this may be brought into the compass of one line, though written in capital letters. Pray have you made a good Protestant of Mr. Hooke ?† If you cure heresy and schism, should you not have your doctor's degree in divinity rather than law? I cannot give you a

* Mr. West's conversation had a great influence on Mrs. Montagu in regard to religion.

† Hooke, the author of the Roman History, was a Mystic, and a Quietist, and a warm disciple of Fenelon. He brought a Catholic priest to Pope on his death bed.

good account of my time ; I have scarcely been able to read at all, but perhaps sickness gives as good lessons as may be had from books, and better a great deal than we may expect from Lord Bolingbroke, who, I hear, will leave behind him a new system of morality, which is to comprehend all speculative and practical things, and to reconcile all that in the moral system, seems to shock and surprise ; but, I believe, my friend, it is not in mere philosophy *to justify the ways of God to man*. As to the rules of conduct to be given by this noble writer, I hope they will not be such as have governed him ; for should they make us what they have left him, virtue would be no great gainer ; none of the boisterous passions of his youth restrained ; none of the peevish or mischievous ones of his old age mitigated or allayed : envy, ambition, and anger, gnawing and burning in his heart to the last. May this find you all in health ; on that subject, only do you put your friends to the expence of a wish, or pain of a solicitude ; a mind like yours

has every other felicity in *the sweet peace*
that goodness bosoms ever.

I am Sir, with the highest esteem,
your most affectionate cousin, obliged
and faithful friend,
E. M.

*To the Same.**

Sandleford, the 26th of May, 1752.

DEAR COUSIN,

I WAS informed by Mrs. Isted, that you
intended to return to town in the middle of
this week, so I imagine that by this time
you are in the empire of China. The
leafless trees, and barren soil of my land-
scape, will very ill bear a comparison
with the shady oaks and beautiful verdure

* This letter is addressed to Mr. West, at Mrs. Montagu's house in Hill-street, where he was residing at the time, for the purpose of attending the privy council, to which he had been recently appointed clerk. She was then fitting up a room in the Chinese taste.

of South Lodge,* and the grinning mandarins still worse supply the place of a British statesman: but as you can improve every society and place into which you enter, I expect such hints from you as will set off the figures, and enliven the landscape into rural beauty. I grieved at the rain, from an apprehension that it might interfere with your pleasure at South Lodge; I hope it did not, but that you saw the place with the leisure and attention it deserves; if you give me an account of the parts of it which charmed you most, or of the whole, you will lead my imagination to a very fine place in very good company, and I shall walk over it with great pleasure. I imagine you would feel some poetic enthusiasm in the temple of Pan, and hope it produced a hymn or ode, in which we shall see him, "knit with the Graces, and the "Hours in dance lead on the eternal "spring," through groves of your unfading bays. I hope you do not attribute

* Then the residence of Mr. Pitt.

my pleasure in receiving your letters, or readiness to answer them, merely to a Chinese taste. I think it may be owing to a better cause, an admiration of what is beautiful in sentiment and morals, rather than for the fantastic and grotesque in forms and figure : so though I am pleased with the perfection my room will receive from your assistance, and much obliged to you for the trouble you take on that account, accept my first thanks for the more rational and elegant part of my pleasure, the letters it occasions you to write. If Mr. Linnell designs to gild the bird he sent me the drawing of, it will look like the sign of the eagle at a laceman's door. If japanned in proper colours, it will resemble a bird only in colour, for in shape it is as like an horse. I wish these men of art could sometimes deviate into the natural. I approve well of the carved canopy, and for the painted one, I am willing it should be effaced if you think the place will look better without it. I consider such canopies with the utmost contempt, while I look up to that now

over my head : my desk and I are placed under the shade of some noble elms which partly exclude the garish eye of day. I assure you I have great attentions to my health, and to enjoy the more of the balmy breath of this sweet season, my hours either of idleness or occupation are chiefly spent in the garden ; of late the bright and fervent beams of Phœbus have sent me under “ arched roofs of twilight groves,” and at this time of the year I should prefer my sylvan palace to the Louvre, as indeed the work of a nobler architect, and the abode of worthier inhabitants, whose soft notes soothe without the arts of flattery. The heart must want benevolence that is not cheered by sounds of joy, and it is not the smallest and most inconsiderable advantage belonging to the human species, that we are so made as to be partakers of all the happiness, and spectators of all the beauty in the animal, or inanimate part of the creation, while the individuals of other species have only their peculiar share of com-

forts, and their observation probably is confined to a few objects.

The soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way,

may, in each grove and meadow, find enough to admire and delight in, and without the helps of science to investigate the great laws of the universe, may, by even a slight observation of his lowest works, adore and thank the great Author with the highest reverence and gratitude. I have for many years had a taste for rural pleasures, which people seldom find during their youth and gay season of life. Mr. Pope says, "ill health is an early old age;" it is so indeed, in bringing on weakness and infirmity, but perhaps it makes one fond of a tranquil life. A cheerful prospect, the song of a linnet, a fragrant gale from sweet shrubs or flowers, and many gentle subjects delight a mind softened by the gentle decays brought on by frequent indispositions, which perhaps are despised and overlooked by persons

in the joy and pride of health. A mind once properly harmonized, may have its tone softened and lowered by sickness, but will hardly be put out of tune; and if the harmony be but preserved, it is sufficient, no matter for the key. I fear you find your place rather a misfortune, while it calls you from the gentle shades of Wickham, to the dust of Hill-street; and yet I cannot help wishing you had more of fortune's embarrassments. The first grace is to appear well without rich ornaments, the second, to move easily and well under them; pardon me for wishing to lower your character from the highest to the second degree. I am sorry to hear Sir George Lyttleton and Miss West are to go to Tunbridge so soon, for I fear they will leave the place the earlier, as they go at the beginning of the season. I hope to arrive the beginning of next month. Perhaps you will receive a visit to-morrow from my brother William, who, I imagine may pass a day or two in Hill-street, in his way to this place; I wrote to him my advice to take this opportunity

to pay his respects to you, but possibly a little college awkwardness, added to natural timidity, may prevent his doing it. I assure you he is a very good young man, more I will not say, for having for some years had a mother's care of him, I have also a mother's partiality: perhaps you may like him the better for his resemblance to your son; I shall be glad of every thing that can recommend him to your notice. I am glad Lady Di: has shewn her spirit while it is time; but surely the young man wants discernment, not to distinguish between characters so very different, as the lover's and the husband's.

I am, dear Cousin,

Your most obliged and faithful friend,

ELIZA MONTAGU.

*To the Same.**Tunbridge Wells, Wednesday, Sept. 2d, 1752.*

To say I regret the loss of your company at this place, and in my present situation, would very ill express the value I set on your conversation, and I should be cautious of even appearing to fall short in my estimation of it, as it is by that only I can be at all worthy of the pleasures and advantages that arise from it. The weather has been very bad ever since you left us, and many people are gone away, which I less wonder at than to see their places supplied by a new set: as to the change of company on the walks, I regard it no more than the succession of vegetables in the garden: they vary the prospect indeed, but make little difference in the pleasure of the walk, and one scarce observes whether the early primrose, or Michaelmas daisy enamel the pastures. Sir W. Brown has left us; I hear he retreated with discontent; he thought himself ill rewarded

for the pains he took to canvass all subjects, and inform all hearers. He has not found out that the wisest man in the company is not always the most welcome, and that people are not at all times disposed to be informed. I hope Miss Speed likes her hat ; I am sorry she had it not earlier in the summer, such a bergere would bring pastoral life into fashion. Your admirer, Mr. Coventry, enquired after you this morning. I was not at the ball last night, but the misses say it was a very agreeable one ; perhaps they liked it the better as Miss Bladen was not there to outshine them, for so strong in woman is the laudable desire of pleasing, each would have that happy power confined entirely to her own person. I have observed for some days, that Lady Abercorn and Lady Townshend, each determining to have the most wit of any person in the company, always choose different parties and different ends of the room. Dr. Stewart has been here two or three days, but I am not acquainted with him, so I cannot tell you whether he comes

here as a physician or an invalid. Pray tell me if my* Lydia has not a fine little family, and whether you do not think she makes an amiable figure amongst them, though indeed she is now in too weak a state to shine out in her full lustre. Mr. Montagu desires I would say a great deal for him, and tell you how much he regrets the loss of your company; but indeed I know not how to express either our obligations to you for the time you bestowed on us, nor the reluctance with which one parts with such a friend and companion; in return I can only wish you every felicity this life affords. I desire my best respects to Mrs. West, and compliments to Lady Cobham and Miss Speed: I wish the fair shepherdess a happy meeting with her pastor fido,† at the next masquerade, for I think it is more probable she will meet him there, than under the shady oak or spreading beech. When

* Mrs. Botham, by birth a Miss Lumley, of the Scarborough family.

† Miss Speed married the Comte de Viri, Minister from the King of Sardinia.

you go to Bullstrode, make my compliments to the Dutchess, and tell her I propose to write to her as soon as I leave the stupifying springs of Tunbridge, which might petrify a genius to a dunce : think what must be their effect on an ordinary brain ! However, I am not so stupified as not to know ten thousand reasons why I should be ever Mr. West's admirer, friend, &c. &c.

ELIZA MONTAGU.

*To her Sister, now Mrs. Scott.**

Tunbridge, the 14th September, 1752.

DEAR SISTER,

To my great comfort we leave Tunbridge on Monday. I propose to go to Hinch-

* Mrs. Montagu's sister married George Lewis Scott, Esq. She formed a very intimate friendship with Lady Barbara Montagu, sister of the Earl of Halifax. They lived together many years until Lady Barbara's death. Mrs. Scott published the life of Theodore Agrippa

ingbroke in a few days. I long to see poor Sandleford: I shall not find it in beauty; it will have lost its vernal honours, but quiet and leisure will be there. Sir Dudley and Lady Ryder came hither about ten days ago; she enquired after your health, and desired I would tell you she would have wrote to you, if she could have wrote as well as you do; I told her you had so great a regard for her, I was sure her letters would give you great pleasure. I am charmed with the attorney-general; 'so much cheerfulness and ease in a man so engaged in business surprises me; it must be a strong mind that does not find itself incumbered and embarrassed in such employments, and an amiable one that is not hardened by them. The attorney was sent for to London yesterday in haste, I presume to the privy council; they are to return on Saturday, and dine with us on Sunday, which will leave a better impression of the pleasures

D'Aubigné. The life of Gustavas Vasa. Also Sir George Ellison, and Millennium Hall, two novels.

of Tunbridge than I should have otherwise. I am glad Lord and Lady Halifax are coming to Bath, as it will be a great pleasure to Lady Bab. Lady Dupplin, I suppose, is converted from a love to consecrated oil, and the hope of extreme unction, for she is a lover of grease: I suppose she has a dispensation to forbear the use of holy water; she has an abhorrence of all kinds of ablution. I never saw a place more entirely disagreeable than this is now; I sigh for Monday. The weather is so bad, one cannot walk, and I have no amusement during the drinking the water, but hearing a parcel of strange folks tell their diseases and their dreams. Mrs. Barker (our Bath friend) held forth an hour, to prove that if she had gone away yesterday, she should not have been here to day, and though perhaps your limited understanding may not see a possibility of denying the proposition, after she had talked an hour upon it, I began to doubt, and to avoid a dispute, for I felt myself inclined to the other side of the argument, I rose up and went to the

other end of the room, but I hope this duplicity only regards Mrs. Barker, for I should be inconsolable, if, going away on Monday, I should find myself here on Tuesday. I had a great loss of the Russian Ambassadors, she was all that was left of our party, and she is lively and agreeable, and I had got over the shame of speaking bad French. I like Lady Ryder extremely, but she ran away with her husband yesterday morning.

I am,
your most affectionate Sister,
and sincere Friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Heys, 7th October, 1752.

MY DEAREST,
YOUR letter from Canterbury was an agreeable instance how readily you embrace
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all opportunities of making me happy. I was truly rejoiced to hear you got so far on your journey safe and well, and am glad you contrived to pick up some amusement from objects on the road. I can easily imagine the tower of the Cathedral shewed a fine prospect, as the environs of Canterbury are rich and well cultivated, and the whole face of the country is adorned with many fine features smiling with peace and plenty. The inside of the Gothic building is fine, and its silent inhabitants present to one's mind some of the most eminent characters in the British annals. The turbulent Becket lies there as quiet as a parish priest, neither his own presumption as in life, nor others credulity as soon after his death, rendering him formidable or respectable. The black Prince's tomb demands perhaps more lamentations from a true Englishman than the more recent loss of another Prince of Wales. Edward was a patriot Prince without a Bolingbroke for his preceptor. Civil government had not then been treated by the pens of the learned,

nor was policy the study of men retired, but the generous, wise, and brave, from the suggestions of their own minds, knew how to protect liberty and encourage arts. What shall we urge in favour of ages of refinement, if in the more rough and rude ones, when virtue was less in theory, it was more in practice? must we think the world, like an old man, reasons wisely, but is grown too weak for actions of great force and moment? in all things this age can discourse more aptly than the former, but whoever reads the annals, will hardly give us the palm of victory and preference. I was airing this morning, and I took more pleasure in the fine weather, as I hoped you were partaking its pleasures and benefits. The country looks very beautiful, the shades of autumn improve the landscape, but they suggest the approach of winter, so that one loses by reflection, the pleasure one receives by sight; the robin's notes, gentle as they sound to the ear, threaten the mind with the rough season of the year. I am sorry your horse does not like hard road, for

the ways about Horton are very stony.
A dull horse is like a dull friend ; one is
safe, though not much delighted in his
company ; I had rather trust you to an
animal whose vivacity is not greater than
his discretion ; but if want of spirit make
him stumble, harm may happen that way ;
so pray take care. Adieu ! my dearest,
may you find amusement every where,
but the most perfect happiness with her,
who is by every grateful and tender
sentiment,

Your most affectionate
and faithful wife,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, the 26th November, 1752.

MY most amiable and valuable Cousin,
YOUR letter, like manna in the wilderness,
was a very sweet and pleasant refresh-
ment, seasonably and kindly bestowed,

and rather wished for than expected or deserved by one in a distant and desolate situation, while you live within the sphere though not in the centre of the world's business and pleasures. You talk of courts and councils, of kissing the hands of Kings and Princes, and such things as in my sequestered bower were totally forgotten. You introduce me to a known world when you carry me into a garden planted with firs and laurel, and you offer them to me for subjects of moral reflections, for which, as you rightly judge, I have by nature and circumstances, all the leisure and dulness from whence they usually proceed. You seem so satisfied in your choice of plants, it would be barbarous to say any thing against so well weighed an opinion, and perhaps, considering how small a part of time they share,

That are both wonderful sweet and fair,

you may do best to prefer the lasting to the delicate beauties of nature : however, I am far from thinking, as you seem to

do, that you have triumphed over the power of Time. You have deferred to him as men do to a tyrant in a rigorous government, where the penalty of sumptuary laws imposes an involuntary temperance in luxury and ornament, and they can escape the fine only by homely plainness and rigid simplicity. There are animals and vegetables whose existence is bounded by the evening and morning of the same day, and we should probably laugh, if the day-fly on the day-lily was to complain of the frailty of its habitation; yet when the changing mind of man is seeking permanent objects, it is much the same case. I have generally seen that the possessors of the most fading subjects were weary of them before their decay. Indeed, Cousin, you must let me laugh at so ill-grounded an hope as that of unwearied pleasure in unvarying objects. That you may not be too vain of your ever or never-green garden, remember that while you avoid the winter, you exclude the spring, and forbid the glad return of the vernal season, as well

as the sad approach of autumn. In your garden and in your life, may all that is necessary for shade, for shelter, and for comfort, be permanent and unchanging; may the pleasures and aromatics be various, successive, sweet, and new ! The shades of Pindus alone afford delight at this inclement season of the year. There the beams of Phœbus give light and warmth, the zephyrs breathe soft gales, and incessant music fills the grove. However, I do not resign all pretension to a walk round Wickham gardens, because I prefer your province in Parnassus, to your territory in Kent; but I must most admire those plants of celestial seed, where the sweetness of the rose and delicacy of the lily, are joined to the permanency of the ever green, and will flourish in unfading bloom through ages. I shall be much obliged to you, if, when you see the incomparable Mr. Bower, you will get of him the second volume of the History of the Popes, Mrs. Isted having mislaid the receipt, I never sent for it; but I have almost finished Mr. Hooke's history, and I do not care to quit

the city of Rome till I have seen the establishment of its spiritual monarchy. Strange that it should become the mistress of the world both by Mars and the Prince of Peace: and I think it must be more amusing to observe, the subtile arts of policy “creeping obliquely to its treacherous ends,” than the violence of heroic valour, and the open force of

“Reckless ambition, that right onward wends.”

Indeed I have been sometimes almost out of patience at the Romans for “fighting still, and still destroying,” adorning their city with military triumphs, but not with the great ornaments of human society, sciences and arts; they subdued barbarians, but not barbarity; their liberty indeed they nobly maintained, but she is a rude divinity by herself, chiefly valuable as the mother of science, “the fairer daughter of a mother fair.” I admire Mr. Hooke more than the Romans he writes of; he seems to have the spirit of liberty, with all the arts she protects. I have been much obliged to him for many

agreeable hours ; the great events of history make a pleasing variety, and chequer well with the little details of life. To go from the toilette to the senate-house : from the head of the table to the head of an army ; or, after making tea for a country justice, to attend the exploits, councils, and harangues of a Roman consul, gives all the variety the busy find in the bustle of the world, and variety and change (except in a garden) make the happiness of our lives. But alas, how poor is the present instant, that it is forced to beg its amusement of times past, or to come ; the departed, or the unborn hour, must lend events or hopes to entertain the present minute. Life is like the tragedy of Hamlet, there must be a play in a play, one tale and fable included in another, to bring on the catastrophe, and fill the spaces with amusing representation. If you please to leave Mr. Bower's history with Ann, I shall order it hither some time hence, when I send for some other things. Do not forget my compliments to the author, I am sure he well deserves them, while I am owing so excellent an

entertainment to his labours ; I suppose he is settled in town by this time, and then the Madonna* will be glad to find him when she returns to the regions of life. I have just received a collection of letters, wrote by Madame de Maintenon, though Voltaire has diminished my opinion of her in some degree : yet I have an impatience to open the book : I shall like to see what alteration there is in her from the wife and widow of poor Scarron, to becoming the consort of Louis le Grand. I see the first letters are written in her humble state ; I have but this instant opened the paquet, and I must write two letters, and walk two miles before I can give audience even to the great Maintenon : you will imagine that I am in extraordinary health, when I talk of walking two miles in'a morning.

I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere and most affectionate friend
and cousin,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

* Mr. Bower wrote frequently to Mrs. Montagu in Italian. The name of Madonna was applied to her also by Lord Lyttelton and Mr. West.

To the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen.

Dec. 24th, 1752.

I proposed answering my dear Mrs. Boscawen's letter yesterday, but the Chinese room was filled by a succession of people from eleven in the morning till eleven at night. I am glad Madame de Staal amused you, for I cannot help thinking it is possible to want amusement by the fire side in the country; Madame de la Ferté's character, I believe, must appear more natural to the French than to us; and yet even in our country, where there is so much less of vivacity and changeableness of disposition, one has seen what is not unlike it in people whose rank and fortune have allowed them to indulge every humour and caprice. I cannot say that I love Madame de Staal well enough to pity her so much as her misfortunes deserve; adversity mends her head, but not her heart; her reason is improved, but not her temper. For my part I own myself a severe critic in temper; talents of the

understanding are the gifts of heaven, and of those only to whom much is given, much should be required; but it seems to me, that all people have it in their power in a great degree to mitigate the faults of temper; the wise should do it that they may be loved, the foolish that they may be endured. I know if M. de Staal was looking over my shoulder, she would say I could not pardon her pettishness because I looked upon her as a chambermaid; and that the same fault in the Dutchess of Maine would have offended me less: I will allow this in part, for the Dutchess never felt the misery of peevishness and of insolence from a superior; and was therefore less apprized of the ill she did in tyrannizing over her attendants, than M. de Staal in teizing her servants; but, if it was a greater crime in the inferior, it would have been a greater indecorum in the great lady. Persons in a high rank ought to be well instructed in all their duties, and acquit themselves of them with grace as well as justice. I cannot say I was very much amused with

the Memoirs ; as they were recommended, I read them ; as you observe, they agree with my opinion of a court ; and yet they have more of the miseries of servitude than of the evils of a court in them ; personal jealousies, little tracasseries, and the business of faction are not there described, as royal power was not belonging to that court ; nor is there set forth the wretchedness “ of

That poor man that hangs on princes favours ;
There is, betwixt that smile he would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes and his ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars and women have.”

But this testimony, you will say, is given by Woolsey, descending from the ladder of greatness ; and it is true, those who are ascending have their heads too giddy to form any serious judgment. In ambition they judge worst who see the objects nearest. The papers will inform you of the filling the places, with at least as much certainty as I can do ; our friend, the amiable Miss Pitt was with me last night ; she desired me to say she loves and honours

you. If Mr. Botham has Homer's *Odyssey* I recommend it to your perusal ; Penelope is not at all like Madame de la Ferté.

Adieu, dear Madam.

To Edward Montagu, Esq.

Heys.

MY DEAREST,

I HOPE this will find you safe and well at a place where I am sure the society will be pleased and happy to receive you. It adds much to the mortifications of infirm health that it incapacitates me for visiting my friends. I suppose you will see the place with great veneration, where your consort's virtues, charms, and accomplishments were ripened into their present state of perfection. I hope the sight of so many merry bachelors does not revive in you the love of a single state ; their's is

the joy of the wicked, not the pure comforts of a holy state like matrimony : if they can laugh, it is well, and while they are young and gay their condition is not to be pitied, but when they come into the lean and slippered pantalon, then they will find their condition most sadly forlorn. Poor Mr. Brockman is the only man truly sensible of the evils of celibacy, and he weeps and will not be comforted, as all unmarried men should do, were they truly sensible of their misfortune.

My sister writes word that the Duke of Cumberland was received with great affection by the populace at Bath ; they called him their Joshua, their deliverer, the saviour of their lives and liberties, and the town was quite crowded by people who came from the neighbouring villages. Miss G — has given her name to her husband ; indeed if he accepts her person he may take any thing else that belongs to her. Lady Sandwich gives me a good account of her son.

Mr. Bower and his wife are to come to me on Friday, and stay till Sunday or

Monday ; he is a very merry entertaining companion ; he left all gloominess in that seat of horrors the Inquisition. I breakfasted with him on Tuesday ; he is but between two and three miles from Heys ; his wife is civil and silent, so I asked her to come over with him. I never saw any country more beautiful than about Chislehurst, where he lives ; I cannot say much in praise of his habitation, which he calls his Paradiso ; but indeed to a mind as gay and chearful as his, all places are a paradise. He is much engaged with those old ladies the popes, but says he will leave the Santi Padri for his Madonna ; he will teach me the pronounciation of Italian, which he has reduced into such a method, it may be easily acquired. He taught it to Mr. Garrick at Tunbridge.

I lament that I am not with you ; besides the pleasure of seeing my brothers, I should have reviewed with satisfaction the place where I spent the careless days of infancy, and the more gay ones of early youth. To the fair the years from fifteen to twenty are very agreeable

While we are pleasing, we are pleased;
so grateful is the heart of woman. The
wise man was mistaken, who allied vanity
to vexation; he might have made the
latter tread on the heels of the former,
but they seldom go hand in hand. The
king will be over by the tenth of next
month, but the yatchts are not ordered,
as the papers have said. My love to the
gentlemen of Horton.

I am, my dearest,
your most faithful, affectionate,
and obedient wife,
E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, 6th of January.

My most excellent and honoured Cousin,
I TAKE the first opportunity to return my
most sincere thanks for the acceptable
favour of your last letter. The wounds
friendship has made, friendship can best

medicine. I have on this melancholy occasion found the strongest proofs of regard from all my friends, and one is never more touched by them than when one's heart is tender and sore with affliction. I know not what I said in my letter, for my mind was so shocked at my arrival here, that for some days I was insupportably low. I find by yours that my letter was very short, I am now better able to attend to the voice of reason and duty, and you have with the utmost force, as well as tenderness, urged their best arguments. I will own myself to blame for not calling them sufficiently to my assistance, assured as I am, I should not then have sunk so low. A friendship begun in infancy, and re-united by our common loss and misfortune, had many tender ties. I agree with you, that my friend was not happy, but she grew daily more contented. By tender care, I had raised her from despair almost to tranquillity. I had hourly the greatest of pleasures, that of obliging a most grateful person. That I did thus hourly please her, was her merit, not mine,

for she made every employment undertaken for me, and every expression of my satisfaction in her execution of those employments, a pleasure. The servile ministry of millions of mercenary or timorous slaves cannot give the pleasure I received from her kind offices, which, however considerable, still fell short of the zeal that prompted them. Of this you can have no imagination, unless you had known her intimately, nor do I know there is a pattern of it left in the world. She was much endeared, and her loss embittered to me by another consideration, which you may reasonably blame, as it shews too fond an attachment to those things which we ought to resign to the Great Giver; but while she was under my care, I thought a kind of intercourse subsisted between me and a most dear and valuable friend whom I lost this time five years. Whatever I did for her, I thought done for that friend, on whom my affections, hopes, and pride, were placed: but alas! what are affections, hopes, and pride, founded on any mortal

subject? *Oh death, all eloquent!* that can confute all arguments of hope, dependence, and every affection our nature is most prompt to! Pardon me for having said so much on subjects that relate merely to myself, but I know you are not only sorry for my affliction, but for the want of submission and resignation that may have appeared in it, and also for my not having present to my mind the consolations to be found in the great truths you have so constantly set before me, and enabled me to see; but indeed I hope that some part of my dejection was owing to a kind of seizure that came too quick upon me to be opposed by thought. I have spent my hours in application to the book of consolation; but that truly heavenly temper, which in others is a momentary effort, is in you become a habit. So fixed and settled are you, and so "well principled in virtue's book," you can never on the most sudden occasion, fall into confusion and error. May you ever enjoy without a cloud, "the soul's calm sunshine," and win by example, as

well as convince by argument ! I am pleased with the track your son has fallen into at Oxford ; a course of reading and conversation with men of learning and solidity will direct that vivacity which is an advantage, if well employed, if not, it is nothing. I sent him Rollin's History, which I fancy he will like better than the Universal History. Some knowledge of ancient history is necessary, a very exact or enlarged one, perhaps, not so. Voltaire, and Lord Bolinbroke, historians of later ages, speak with much contempt of ancient history, and certainly if they mean that it does not give a knowledge of the present state of nations and interests of Europe, they are very much in the right, but to attain a true knowledge of human nature, what can be better than to study the unsophisticated man of ruder ages ?

When we consider what discoveries in philosophy have been made, how many arts have been improved, how easily by printing each improvement in science is communicated to all nations, and how safely conveyed through ages, we are

tempted to think meanly of the ancients. One might imagine all Newton's light, and Bacon's sense, entering the mind of every attentive reader; that each age should stand on the eminence raised by the former, "till mountains, heaped on mountains, reached the skies;" but alas! we know by experience it is otherwise. Great improvements are made by the extraordinary portion of intellectual gifts in individuals, not the inheritance and succession of ages. From Archimedes to Sir Isaac Newton, what a chasm! The only great and perfect in art or science, are the self taught. A man of lively and agreeable imagination has suggested many pretty arguments why a blind stroller should write the best epic poem;* he might as well have accounted for his stature, or the colour of his hair: it was owing to certain properties of the individual man called Homer. Could he tell us why the supple courtier of Augustus, and humble companion of his minister, should be the best satirist? There are

* Blackwell's life of Homer.

genius's superior to all impediments, and some who have made to themselves times and occasions, and have risen to the utmost degree of human perfection among the rude and the illiterate; and is it not worth a person's attention to examine these great and original characters? But in these ancient histories there is a mixture of fable, and in modern history, of lyes. A fable may show something of the genius or customs of the people; a party lye does not. The account you give me of a certain lady gives me much pleasure; for the sake of some very amiable and respectable persons, I wish her conduct may be such as may contribute to their honour, and happiness; I wish her to be right for her own sake. I have not great malice against those who, knowing, misrepresent me, less still to such as not knowing, mistake me. It is said by some writer who honoured women (and perhaps geese) less than they deserve, that few women have the virtues of an honest man. If it be so, a little of the blame must fall to the share of the men, who are more

easily deluded than persuaded into any compliance. This makes the women have recourse to artifice to gain power, which, as they have gained by the weakness or caprice of those they govern, they are afraid to lose by the same kind of arts, addressed to the same kind of qualities; and the flattery bestowed by the men on all the fair from 15, makes them so greedy of praise, that they most excessively hate, detest, and revile every quality in another woman which they think can obtain it. I shall give Mrs. Donnellan the pleasure of knowing the civil reception my cousin found at the Bishop of Cloyne's; I did not doubt of his lordship's shewing respect to your son, for though he wears lawn and petticoats, he cannot be angry at merit superior to his own, or jealous of that which is equal to it.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU,

To the Same.

The 13th of January, 1753.

My most excellent Cousin.

MR. ISAAC will do my letters most unmerited honour if he considers them as news-papers. Fame's mighty trumpet has no notes loud enough to reach my ears at Sandleford, nor of the lies she whispers, or of the truths she bawls, can I hear or repeat one syllable. Most things misunderstood, are misapplied, but the destination of my epistles to the service of the cook, to singe a fowl, or guard the bottom of a minced pye, was a judgment worthy of the wisdom and justice of a Minos or Rhadamanthus. I am much obliged to your amiable brother and Mrs. Temple West for their kind concern for my health; the good wishes of those one esteems, are almost equal to the blessings they desire for one. I am extremely glad that your manner of being

in town will be such as will render yours and Mrs. West's residence there agreeable to you both. Good humour and good order seem to regulate the family you are to be in; together they make an excellent menage: I cannot think they will in such manner preside at the feast of those very discreet virgins, Mademoiselles Lant and Torriano. How came they to think of so jolly a matter as a feast? I think I see them marching round the porridge pot, and singing,

Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

I am very glad Lord Temple is out of danger; his good humour, cheerfulness, and his civility to your son, have recommended him much to me. I am sorry that Mr. Pitt is not in good health. I know it will give you great concern; however, consider the care, skill, and exactness with which nature has fitted up his head, and pardon her for some little neglects in the finishing his stomach: ample amends has been made to him for some

want of bodily health. Consider how much worse is the lot of such who have the same infirmities of body without the extraordinary gifts of the mind. Then indeed, cousin, they are grievous, but one is used to bear them, and patience becomes a habit where suffering is so. I hope Mr. Pitt will next season try the Tunbridge waters; they succeed sometimes when the Bath fails. Pray in your next, let me know what account you have heard of Mrs. Anne Pitt, who, I fear, is in very bad health. I suppose Mr. Pitt has exercised his magic on your garden: let me know how he liked your Gothic seat. When such persons as Sir George Lyttelton and Mr. West pass a week together, one may imagine the time is not spent in mere unprofitable talk; by some things Sir George said to me, I imagined you would together apply to the finishing of a work of which I have heard you speak. You said something when I was at Wickham, of a discourse on miracles: I do not doubt of your treating any subject with a peculiar happiness, but of all

subjects, it is the most nice in a philosophical and sceptical age. Arguments of equal credibility are not always equally believed. The regular process observed by nature in her ordinary productions, and the causes of many extraordinary appearances being now discovered, the philosophers are averse to a belief of miracles. An experience that many things formerly considered as such, were but in the ordinary course, and regular effect of certain powers and qualities, and frequent detection of imposture and fraud in those who pretended to miraculous powers, have together rendered men's minds more averse to that subject, and less open to the conviction of such proofs, so that they raise up both physical and moral objections to such arguments. Excuse me therefore if I say, they are of all the evidences of the Christian religion, what are at present least likely to meet with a candid reception. You did not mention any thing more than barely that the miracles were the subject of your writing; excuse me, therefore, for what I have

said, and believe my concern arises from the most tender and zealous regard to the cause, and its advocate. I should be sorry to see the peace of a good man disturbed, and the pen of a wise one engaged in the impertinent and unprofitable sophistry of controversial writings; indeed there are many prating, but few writing, free thinkers; however, there are always some who can cavil and dispute. I do not mean that I would not wish you to employ your talents in so noble a cause as that of religion, but I would wish them so engaged, as would be most likely to do good to others, and not occasion you any trouble. Our Saviour himself did not urge those truths which he thought his disciples at that season not prepared to receive. I have lately read Mr. Locke's discourse on miracles, and I think, from his very definition of them, it is a difficult subject to write on in such a manner as to give any new light, or higher probability than they carry to every reader, from the account as you have it in the New Testament. I am at present reading

Dr. Clark's evidences of natural and revealed religion, which I think a most incomparable work. I know not what offence might be taken by churchmen, at his disagreement with some orthodox opinions, but as a Christian queen, I should have thought he deserved the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, and all the honours and rewards that it was possible for him to enjoy. One cannot help grieving he had not his reward in this world, but one rejoices to know he cannot have missed it in another. I have heard that the queen had a mind to have preferred him to the highest dignitaries of the church, but his brethren opposed it. I should be sorry to believe that a man who so well demonstrated the being of a god, and set forth the truths of the gospel, and enforced the moral obligations by every argument, should have been thought deficient in good doctrine. I cannot help thinking I have just run into two great absurdities, one in supposing you could want advice, another in imagining I was fit to give it you : the first,

I can hardly imagine, the second much less, but where one is much interested for a person's happiness, and credit, and I hope you do not doubt my being so for yours, one is too much alarm'd to be wise: forgive me therefore for the sake of the motive. I know you are the person in the world who would be least sensible of the presumption of my advising Mr. West.

I did not understand your charitable and kind admonitions in my affliction, as censures, any farther than as you must always blame what is wrong in itself. Your arguments of consolation are the best that can be used, and I have often read them, and shall keep them in my memory, and also in my cabinet, that if, in the short period of my remaining life, there should new afflictions befall me, I may have timely recourse to them. I thank God most of my friends are more likely by the superior strength of their constitutions to survive than to depart before me; indeed I cannot say so of my poor Lydia, for whom I live in daily anxiety. I have not heard from her this

week, but I hope her silence is rather owing to Dr. Shaw's prohibition of writing than to any extraordinary indisposition. The last account she gave of herself, was a good one.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU

To the Same.

Sandleford, 21st January, 1717

My most honoured Cousin,

I AM much obliged to you for your letter and the good wish at the end of it, which according to Mr. Locke, I may understand to imply no less than that I may neither be sick nor be mad ; I will promise never to be the first by intemperance, the second by pride and impatience ; as far as is right, the rest we leave to Heaven. I cannot think that you have lately died the map of England, otherwise I would not consider Sandleford as a place so remote ; it is certain that it is no

near London as Wickham is, and that we cannot receive so frequent visits from those we like, nor so short ones from persons we do not. The rules of civility and hospitality regulate our intercourse with our neighbours, rather than choice. As to our fireside, it is under the protection of that serious goddess of dullness, who passes in all the country firesides in England, for the true Minerva, though in truth she does rather resemble her owl; however, the place may reasonably please any person who is fond of retirement, and does not affect appearing in the *beau-monde*. For my part, I cannot agree with you, in such contempt of that pretty monster the *beau-monde*, but I know no better proof of that health of the mind you wish me, than the preferring what I ought, to what I like, to do; and indeed I had a free choice, and it has been offer'd to me to return to London whenever I pleased. Did I but know the abode of rosy health, I would repair thither. I have diligently sought the charming goddess, but she flies from my pursuit, and I must content

myself with the society of her best substitute, patience. I approve much of Mrs. West's metamorphosis of London nymphs into those weeds called love and idleness. Ovid himself could not have done better for them, but still I hope you will both leave so much of your wisdom at Wickham, as would be inconvenient in town. I think there is but one way by which you can either of you avoid pleasing in any society, and that is by not being pleased in it; that I own to be an infallible method. If Mrs. West was to be obliged to appear with pompons in her cap, and your worship under like necessity to wear a toupet, I should pity you both, but good sense and merit are agreeable to all modes, and take well in every soil and climate, though people are apt to imagine that they belong only to that region in which they happen to live. I believe seven years residence in London would confirm one in an opinion that no humane arts or conversation reach beyond Knightsbridge. The same number of idle summers and dull winters pass'd in the country would

make one pronounce every thing in town to be idle, frivolous, and vain. One ought not to contract a local character: it imposes on no one but ones self, however happily united with the place it never passes for a perfect and complete one. It may be difficult for the vain and the gay to find their proper pleasures in the country, but I know no talents or virtues that may not find employment and gratifications in a great city. The beau-monde will pay you respect for not imitating their follies, a compliment with which they reward the complaisance of their own set only when they excel in the arts they profess. Philosophic pride treads the stage with more comic effect than social complacency. The first or second of February I shall return to London without the least concern about the figure I shall make there, most happily trusting that I shall not make any figure at all. Naturalists have taken pains to class the different kinds of plants and animals, but moralists have left three parts of mankind without any particular character, and they are at

liberty to add themselves to a gay assembly, a philosophical lecture, be present at a reasonable conversation, or go with the crowd to see Harlequin in a bottle. Happy the animal that can live in all elements, though it dignifies, or is dignified by none! When Mr. Garrick is walking on tip-toe on the stage, raising his voice to the highest key, yet still observing its harmony, studying the grace of every attitude and propriety of every gesture, is he, though the object of admiration, half as happy as the unheeded spectator, who sits lolling on his elbows in the pit? but this, like some other salutary truths, is hid from the mighty and the wise, and revealed to the weak and the simple; else would there have been no Garricks, nor the heroes they represent, neither the catastrophe nor dramatic poem, nor tragedian, nor any thing of "what in any age ennobled hath the buskin'd stage," or filled the theatre of the world with rumor. I could wish Mr. Pitt some of this happy insignificancy I have been boasting of, that he might pass this winter in a warmer

climate. The rigours of this winter are insupportable. My little cousin's behaviour at Oxford must please you extremely, and with a heart that truly sympathises in all your sentiments, I congratulate you upon it. I suppose he has received Rollin's history, which I sent before I left London. I did not presume to give my advice, or perhaps I should have recommended Sir Walter Raleigh's history, rather than Rollin's: they are both addicted to making reflections, but there is great difference in the judgment of an experienced chief and statesman on the affairs of war or policy, and those made by a speculative sçavant, who writes by his fireside. I am sorry your son has so soon lost his friend, the Bishop of Cloyne.* I had just been reading some of his pieces lately published, when I took up the newspapers that mentioned his death; such an event is apt to make one consider what people have done in their lives as an insubstantial vision, but the works I had been reading of his are of that incorruptible nature that is laid up in heaven.

* Dr. Berkeley.

My poor Lydia, thank God, is better, and the babes are getting quite well. You speak of having been visited by the gout, which I am sorry to hear, and may health and all the articles of which happiness is composed, attend you. However indifferently I may esteem my letters at the time I am writing them, I value them highly when they procure me one from you. I am rather better than I was, but not in pride of health or gayety of spirits.

I am
my inestimable Cousin's
most faithful, most affectionate friend,
and obliged humble servant,
ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Tunbridge Wells, 27th May, 1753.

My dearest Cousin! my best and most valuable Friend,

Your kind letter, which I received upon my coming from chapel, is the most.

agreeable thing I have met with at Tunbridge, where we arrived last night about seven. It came very seasonably to relieve my spirits, which are much sunk, by the extreme dejection which appears to day in Mr. Pitt, from a night passed entirely without sleep, notwithstanding all the precautions which were taken within doors to make it still and quiet, and the accidental tranquillity, arising from the present emptiness and desolation of this place, to which no other invalids besides ourselves are yet arrived, or even expected to arrive, as yet. He began to drink the waters to day, but as they are sometimes very slow in their operations, I much fear both he, and those friends who cannot help sympathising with him, will suffer a great deal, before the wished for effect will take place; for this *insomnium*, his physicians have prescribed opiates, a medicine, which in this case, though they may procure a temporary ease, yet often recoil upon the spirits. I think his physicians have been to blame in giving all their attention to the disorder in his

bowels, and not sufficiently regarding the distemperature of his spirits, a disease, much more to be apprehended than the other; while he continues under this oppression, I am afraid it will be impossible for me to leave him, as he fancies me of the utmost use to him, as a friend and a comforter; but I hope in God he will soon find some alteration for the better, of which I shall be glad to give you the earliest information. In the mean time, I beg you will take care of your health, and as the most effectual means of establishing it, I most earnestly desire you will follow Mr. Montagu's exhortations to repair forthwith to Tunbridge; as by so doing, you will not only contribute to the regaining your own health and spirits, but to the comfort and felicity of some here, who love and admire you much, especially one, who values himself much upon the title of your friend, and merits it equally by the great esteem and affection which he has for you. Mr. Pitt expressed a due sense of your goodness in inquiring so particularly after him;

and that you may know how high you stand in his opinion, I must inform you, that in a conversation with Molly, he pronounced you the most *perfect woman* he ever met with. I am with the utmost sincerity and the highest regard, my dearest Cousin's

most affectionate friend,
and obliged humble servant,

GIL. WEST.

To her Husband.

The 8th, 1753.

MY DEAREST,

I AM much obliged to you for your letter from Doncaster, as it has allayed my fears on account of the hazards of a journey, to find you have performed so much of it happily. I reckon with impatience every day of absence from so dear and good a friend; nothing could keep me in tolerable humour during this separation, but the daily progress I make towards better

health; the only blessing I want, and which, though you cannot absolutely bestow it on me, yet you furnish me with means and opportunity of gaining it. It has been much the turn of the society I am in, to go out in parties to see places, and last post day we resolved upon an expedition of this sort, with such precipitation, I had not opportunity to write without keeping all the company waiting. We went to see an old seat of a Mr. Brown's; it is well situated, was built by Inigo Jones, has some fine portraits, none of which delighted me so much, as one by a great hand, of an old woman of above fourscore, great, great grandam to the present possessor: the health and vivacity of the complexion, and the happy serenity of the countenance, expressing the gay conscience of a life well spent, were highly pleasing: her grandson, painted by Vandyck, is in the same piece; he has the amiable grace of infancy, and a countenance void of care, as is usual to children; but it does not express the heart-felt joy, the sober certainty of

waking bliss, which is signified in the old lady's, who, I find, is held in veneration by her descendants. The house is furnished with the good woman's work; I dare say her pleasures were all of the domestic kind, her dairy and poultry her care, her garden her amusement; perhaps to know no more, is woman's highest honour and her praise, and more in our proper character than the cabal and intrigue of state, in which the French ladies place their happiness and glory. We went from this venerable seat, to a place called New Vauxhall, where Mr. Pitt had provided us a good dinner; the view from it is romantic; we staid there till the cool of the evening, and then returned home. We drank tea yesterday in the most beautiful rural scene that can be imagined, which Mr. Pitt had discovered in his morning's ride, about half a mile from hence; he ordered a tent to be pitched, tea to be prepared, and his French horn to breathe music like the unseen genius of the wood. The company dined with me; and we set out, number

eight. After tea we rambled about for an hour, seeing several views, some wild as Salvator Rosa, others placid, and with the setting sun, worthy of Claude Lorrain. These parties are good for health and pleasure, and break the dull line of a Tunbridge life. Sir George Lyttelton and Mr. Bowers are come to spend a few days with Mr. Pitt.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

June the 13th, 1753.

MY DEAREST,

I CAN with pleasure assure you, the waters have hitherto done as well as I could wish, my cough is much abated, and my appetite increased; this return of health will give me double pleasure, as I know it will add to your happiness. I have a constant invitation to dinner at the white stone house; Mr. Pitt is too ill to dine

abroad, and the Wests cannot leave him; so, as often as I am disposed for company, I dine there; the rest of my time passes in taking air and exercise, and now and then the relief of a book. I have chiefly applied myself to Davila's History of the Civil Wars of France; his language is clear, majestic, and noble, his reflections are fine, and the characters drawn in a masterly manner; he is reckoned a partial historian, too favourable to Catherine de Medicis, his country woman, and too much prejudiced against the Huguenots; certainly it is almost impossible to find an impartial and knowing historian. Such only can speak with any certainty of councils, who have been privy to them, and of actions, who have been present at them, and from persons thus engaged, can one expect impartiality? The monk in his cell, and the student in his college, may be impartial, but they are unknowing too. The good that happens in this world, is oftener brought about by the balance of vices, than operation of virtues, and thus the vanity of the historian is a check to

his other passions, he must give a pretty faithful account, or he will fall into disesteem, and he must betray the councils, to shew his intimate acquaintance with them. Sully does not discover so much of Catherine's dissimulation as Davila; one, indeed, calls that prudence, which the other terms base hypocrisy. But one does not want the historian to fix the term, one can do that for ones self. Every page of Davila is big with events; the mind has no time to languish, one is rather hurried from one great event to another; as soon as that infant warrior, that Mars in swathing clothes, (as Shakespeare calls Hotspur,) Henry of Navarre comes forth, one is awake and attentive wherever he appears, knowing how great a figure he will make in his maturer age. As a woman too, I have some pleasure in observing, that Henry the IVth seems to have owed his native fire, and the improvement of it, to his mother; she had not the satisfaction of seeing him placed on the throne of France, which would have given great pleasure to her ambitious spirit;

t she was so fierce an Huguenot, I know
 t whether she would have approved the
 ans he took to get into quiet posses-
 n of it. However, she died before the
 ssacre of St. Bartholomew, perhaps by
 e contrivance of the same spirit which
 ought about that horrid night, the
 ickest perhaps in the annals of time. I
 under concern that you have not heard
 om me, as you may be alarmed about
 r health, which indeed has been unin-
 rupted, and such, that when I con-
 ler the poor condition in which I came
 her, it amazes me. I thought myself
 ntly sinking into the grave, distant
 rhaps, a year or two; but apparently
 my journey thither, so much were my
 irits and strength decayed, and, as Sam-
 n describes his case, nature in all her
 nctions weary of herself; but I sleep
 d eat heartily, have great vigour of
 irits, and really seem to myself, as if
 me magic operation had been wrought
 on me; and I find my disorder has been
 a mere nervous mimickry of disease.
 cannot say but it counterfeited well,

but I do not design to be imposed upon, so as to give such faith to it as I did before I came hither this year. May health and happiness attend on all your footsteps! such are my hourly wishes.

I am, my Dearest,

Your most faithful

and affectionate wife,

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

1753.

My Dearest,

I HAVE more thanks to return to you for your kind and generous attention to my health, than I can express. I am drinking the waters with all diligence, and they agree perfectly. Mr. Pitt, Mr. West, and his son, and Miss West, and the Dean of Exeter,* are going a tour to Maidstone, Canterbury, and Dover; they design to

* Dr. Lyttelton, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. .

see all the seats, parks, castles on the sea-side, and other things worthy of notice : Mr. Pitt thinks the waters more beneficial after these intermissions, but as this place is dull, he gives his days of leisure to the amusement of seeing places. I expect a very exact account of the things they have seen : Mr. Pitt has a correct taste, Mr. West a poetical imagination, and the Dean a love of antiquities, so amongst them one may learn the particulars of all the places they have visited. So various are the minds of men that the same object does not exist in the same manner in any two heads ; so it is of faces, all see the same features, but our opinions of the countenance are different. As the world is furnished with variety, and life made up of it, I know not whether those persons who have some tincture of, and a little acquaintance with, all kinds of knowledge have not more pleasure than such as confine themselves to one branch, though certainly man's life and powers are so limited, a person cannot be master of more than one art or science ; even paint-

ing or music have more in them than the life of man can exhaust. However, this is a question that will bear much argument, for though Providence, to excite man to the pursuit of knowledge, has strew'd pleasures like flowers on the surface; delight and sure satisfaction, like the ore and gem, are buried in the mine, and can thence be brought only by labour, time, and strong application.

All the family at the Stone-house, and myself in their train, went yesterday to Penshurst, and spent a good deal of time in viewing the pictures. I was most pleased with the portraits, as I know not any family that for arts and arms, greatness of courage, and nobility of mind, have excelled the Sidney race. Beauty too has been remarkable in it; they have adorned the Historian's and the Poet's page, but alas, all things change, and I fear that for the future, their highest renown will arise from some paragraph in the news-paper, that bestows on them beauty, wit, and fine accomplishments. We drove about the Park for some time,

admired the fine scenes, and revered the shades where Sir Philip, and Algernon Sidney had pursued their meditations, and Waller touched his gentle lyre. We went from the Park to an inn at Penshurst to dinner, and returned home in the evening.

I am, my dearest,
Your most truly affectionate,
and faithful Wife,
E. M.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, 27th September, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin.
Your kind and agreeable letter restored me in some measure to the temper I lost at going out of town the very day you came to it. I know not what poets may find in the country when they have filled the woods with sylvan deities, and the

rivers with naiades ; but to me, groves, and streams, and plains, make poor amends for the loss of a friend's conversation. You have better supplied Mr. Pitt's absence by reading the orations of his predecessor, Demosthenes, and I can easily imagine you would rather have passed the evening with the British, than the Grecian Demosthenes, whom in talents, perhaps, he equals, and in grace of manners and the sweet civilities of life, I dare say, excels. But when you seem to say you would even have preferred the simple small-talk of your poor Cousin to the Athenian orator, I cry out, Oh, wonderful power of friendship ! which, like the sun, gives glorious colours to a vapour, and brightens the pebble to a gem, till what would have been neglected by the common herd, is accepted by the most distinguished ; thus has your partiality done by me, and having made me your companion and your friend, you at last begin to think I have a right to be so, and as I am in danger of thinking so too, I beg of you not to change your opinion after I

have adopted it. On Tuesday morning about eight o'clock, I call'd upon Mr. Hooke at his hermitage; I found him, like a true savant, surrounded by all the elements of science, but though I looked round the room, I could not perceive any signs of the author, no papers, pen, ink, or sheets just come from the press. I fear the fine ladies and fine prospects of Cookham divert his attention from the Roman History. I desired him to carry me to Mrs. Edwin's, which I heard was a very pretty place, and indeed I do not wonder if the Thames, which plays so prettily round the garden, should make Mr. Hooke forget the Tiber; and there is an old ferry woman, who crosses the Thames very often before Mrs. Edwin's terrace, whom, from acquaintance and friendship, he may prefer to the valiant Clelia, long so famed in story, as you do the impertinent *caquet* of your cousin to the rhetoric of former times; such advantage have present objects, and happy it is so, or the majesty of the antique world might awe the spirits of the puny modern,

and action be lost in contemplation. Mr. Hooke made earnest enquiry after you, and I said for you to him, what I thought equivalent to the regard he expressed for you. While we were in Mrs. Edwin's garden, he betrayed my name to her; my face was well disguised with a pair of spectacles, but on his information, she came down, shew'd me her house, and the pictures, which are very fine, but the views from her windows gave one no leisure to consider the works of art. I shall not endeavour to describe the place to you, as I understand you were there last year to visit Mrs. Stanley, who lives at the edge of the garden. I know not whether the freshness of the morning, a small degree of mistiness in the air, which soften'd the near objects, and the sun obliquely falling upon parts of the wood, did not give it at that time a more than ordinary beauty; but I must own I was never so pleased with any situation on the Thames, its banks being usually flat and naked; these are finely wooded, and rise in variety of eminences. Cliefden Hill

rises majestically in view, and the only flat shore you see from this place, lies straight before it, and is a large plain of the finest verdure, and full of cattle. Many little islands diversify the scene, and the boats continually passing, give life to the picture. This gentle sort of navigation does not take off from the pastoral air of the place; stately vessels are noble objects, but with Bellona's thunder in their sides, they destroy the peace and simplicity of a scene. I will own that the river here, does not appear in such force and magnificence as near Greenwich, but where it gently glides through humble vallies, or fertilizes a little plain, it still keeps a character of nobility. Father Thames in a little valley, has the dignity of a great chief and statesman in retreat: we remember the invincible fleets he has sent forth, the commercial benefits he has procured to his country, the useful arts he has assisted, and the advantageous alliances he has made, uniting his city with every land from whence it can acquire benefit. I need not tell you that I

often wish myself on Mount Ephraim; but as there is pain in fruitless wishes, and my ignoble soul is much afraid of pain, I endeavour to convert all memory of the past into a pleasing thankfulness for happiness enjoyed; but though, as Dr. Middleton was my godfather, you may suppose I have read his Evangelist with great veneration, I cannot find much solid comfort in a doctrine without promise. The remembrance of a well spent life, were all to cease here, is indeed a satisfaction; the pride of a stoic may blow it up very high, especially when he has added the immortality of a name, and while he considers the perishable state of his own nature can proudly add,

But fame with golden wings aloft doth fly,
Above the reach of ruinous decay,
And with brave plumes doth beat the azure sky,
Admir'd by base born men from far away.

Such are the comforts of the budge doctors of the stoic fur, but what are they to a lady in a blonde cap? I am looking forward to future summers, and when

most serious, to the eternal summer. I have been very well ever since I saw you, I have spent most of my time in walking and airing; a few hours for reading I have in my power, though my fair disciples hinder me a good deal;* they have been stunning me ever since I sat down, with the achievements of the boisterous Semiramis, and the effeminate delicacy of Sardanapalus; had he kept on the helmet, and her ladyship set to the distaff, much trouble had been saved to M. Rollin, the misses, and your humble servant, and you would have had a more intelligible letter. You know I have your permission to trouble you with long letters, a dangerous license to one whom want of thought, does not reduce to silence, but every line I write must be considered as an *elope* of your patience and condescension; having so long dwelt on your virtues, I will now remember your talents, and detain you no longer from such employ-

* Mrs. Montagu had the daughters of her deceased friend, Mrs. Botham, with her.

ments as they will naturally lead you to,
and you will pardon all my impertinence
for the respect and affection with which

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 4th of October, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin,

I FOUND your letter on my table last night, at my return from a sober airing on the neighbouring commons. I have kept up our Tunbridge custom, of going out for an hour or two in the afternoon, and by that means I make the hours of idleness a time of amusement, which is not always to be accomplished where one has not change of company. I know not whether I am not more fond of this custom, as it seems to bring me in some measure back to the agreeable life of Mount

Ephraim. Happy should I be, if I could as easily renew all that was improving and delightful to the mind in those airings, as I can pursue what they had of healthful to the body and pleasant to the eye! Dr. Young says, wisdom grows on all plants, and in every rill a pure instruction flows, but there wants a certain chymical art and skill to extract this sapient virtue, and I find I can get it only by the liberality of those who charitably dispense it to the poor; you may easily believe, therefore, how much I regret the rich and charitable corporation into which I was long admitted; such were the turn of my thoughts and tune of my disposition, when I found your letter ready to make up for all that had been deficient in my airing; imagine then the welcome I gave to it. In my solitary musings in the coach, I had sometimes cast an eye of envy on the humble cottage, which to the beholders, if not to the inhabitants, shews the sweet aspect of content. We are apt to think their wishes have as narrow limits as their possessions, and their tem-

pers are as uniform as their way of life ; that tranquillity must reside in minds that have never been agitated by hope or fear, awakened by solicitous cares, or refined by delicacy ; which last, is most perhaps, the enemy of human happiness. A delicate person, like a sickly traveller on an inconstant sea, suffers equally from too brisk or too languid a gale, must have fair weather, sunshine, prosperous winds and favourable tides to make the voyage pleasant ; while insensibility bears every change with equanimity, unruffled in the most boisterous storm, unwearied in the deadest calm. Thus in the wanderings of imagination, had I run over all the advantages of rustic stupidity, but when your letter presented to me pleasures which can arise only from delicacy of taste and a well awakened sensibility ; I changed my opinion, envied neither shepherd nor shepherdess, but giving due preference to the pleasures of reason and taste, I sat down by my fireside with more than calm content, with real delight and satisfaction. The poor cottagers, who,

perhaps as erroneously ascribe happiness to wealth, as we may peace to poverty, had probably envied me the ease and indolence I enjoyed in the coach, and little imagined I should receive much greater pleasure at my return, from a single sheet of paper, than I had done in an equipage, which to them, must appear a piece of pomp and luxury; so little can we judge of untasted pleasures and unexperienced sensations! and so often do we mistake the object, when we envy! I am much obliged to Mr. Cheere for his regard to me, and he applies it as I could wish, when he employs it in your service. I cannot at all suspect that he designed this adorned and high finished piece, as an emblem of your cousin; if it should resemble her, a very few winters, some cold blasts, and rough winds, will efface whatever it had originally of beauty, and you must do for it, as I have long done for myself; consider whether it can be made useful and serve some domestic purposes, when it is no longer an ornament to shew abroad. This consideration of a quondam

belle, has made me a school-mistress, which office I find you highly respect, since you are so afraid to interrupt its attentions; but know, my good Cousin, that a correspondence with you can never hurt that great republic, my school, which if I would adorn with manners, and amend with rules, it must be by such as I borrow from you, for of you I must learn what I should teach. I honour and admire the wandering spirit with which you are possessed; if Mrs. West takes to gadding, I shall believe the story of Will o' the wisp. Mr. Pope mentions a sort of people who build houses from whence to run away, sure he could not mean any of my friends! I suppose that before you laid the plan of a month's absence from Wickham, you knew Mr. Pitt would stay so long at the Bath: his departure was so sudden, perhaps you had not settled with Mr. Lyttelton, how often you should receive accounts of his health. Pray when you have any news of him, let me know how the Bath waters agree with him. I often regret that the Tunbridge waters

did not prove as serviceable to him as they have been to me : may the Bath restore him to perfect health for his own sake, that of his friends, and the public. You know my respects always attend my Lord Bishop and Mrs. Sherlock, and Miss Chester.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Saturday, the 13th of October, 1753.

My most honoured Cousin,

YOUR letter met me last night at my return from airing. I had been gliding about the commons by the pale light of the silent moon, conversing with the spirits of my absent friends whom I hoped were all in health, and engaged in scenes more gay than woods, hills, and vallies veil'd in night, or faintly illuminated by a weak and trembling ray. My moonlight

excursions prove that love of dull tranquillity which you despise me for, but I assure you they are very pleasant to me, who am seldom displeased when impertinent or disagreeable objects do not intrude. My mind, like a healthful climate, breeds no plagues; if any come there, they must be imported: I love to see the night gathering all nature's children under its wing; the very zephyrs seem to respect the universal peace and rest, and all things whisper tranquillity, and I am glad to catch the tone. After my airings, I drink tea, then retire to my dressing room for two or three hours with companions, whom superior parts and noble ambition led from the silent path of life to its busiest and most turbulent scenes; if I can get some of their experience without any of their dangers, and a little of their knowledge without any of their passions, I may keep my tranquillity without falling into that stupidity and insensibility which I think still more unworthy of the human mind than vain solicitude, and idle perturbation. I know it is

the custom to answer all letters by the gross, without condescending to take notice of any enquiry or question, so I will, in most glaring capitals, that it may not again be unanswered. desire TO KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD CONCERNING MR. PITT'S HEALTH; you certainly must have heard of him, and I think, you know a good account of him would be very welcome, so I am apprehensive he is not so well as I could wish, but I shall be very glad to part with an unpleasing error; if it be an error, pray contradict me. Mr. Botham and his pretty little boy are here. You will probably receive a letter I sent to Lillingstone; however, should it be lost, you need not repine at it, as you may have as many as you please out of the same mint, so plenty are all things which bear no value. My best, sincerest, and continual wishes ever attend you. I am,

my most honoured Cousin,
 Your much obliged and most affectionate
 and faithful,
 ELIZA MONTAGU.

To the Same.

the 25th.

My honoured Cousin,

You grow so adventurous and bold in taking journeys, that I begin to apprehend you would step into the rapid car of Phœbus if it was offer'd you, "gallop apace the fiery-footed steeds" and travel round the globe in four and twenty hours. Sedentary, solitary, lazy and dull, how unworthy am I of your correspondence! Let my way of life be some excuse for me; remember there is more of vigor, strength, and skill required to dance on the slack, than the tight rope. Descartes, to overcome the vis inertiae, and keep the planet rolling in its sphere, was forced to whirl it in a vortex. I am not carried about by the current of the world, but left on a desert shore, where my mind rests in absolute dulness. You must expect nothing from me but to have the gold you send me changed into silver; increased indeed in weight and bulk, but debased in purity

and worth. I do not find that even the scenes of Bulstrode, though they bring back to my mind the chearful days of youth, bring back the vivacity of that happy season. I believe the menagerie at Bulstrode is exceedingly well worth seeing, for the Dutchess of Portland is as eager in collecting animals, as if she foresaw another deluge, and was assembling every creature after its kind, to preserve the species: she used to be very happy in a great variety of fowls, which is a very fortunate taste, for any one who is much in the country, for they have nothing to do, but to throw down a handful of corn, and cry, biddy, biddy, and behold their friends assemble round them in an instant! while I, who care for none of the winged race, but your Theban swan, walk alone, musing on absent friends, and pleasures past and gone. As to the persons and places you mention, though, perhaps improved since I saw them, I think they cannot have any extraordinary beauty. Nature must furnish her quota, to make persons or places great and elegant. The

elegant spectator of forms, will prefer the fair shepherdess with a garland of roses on her head, to the homely royal dame with her diadem of gold. I think you will prefer Mrs. Edwin's little territory, to all the pomp of——. I am glad you propose to call again on Mr. Hooke. I desire that you will give me an account of all your pleasures, as I take a part in them, and I am willing to accompany you in all your travels. I suppose you have been at Stowe, where Art has exhausted all her powers,

E quel, che il bello, o il caro accresce all' opre
L' arte, che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.

Such, I am told, is its present state; when I saw the gardens they brought not so much to one's imagination the scenes of paradise, as of that garden, "where the sapient king with his fair spouse held dalliance;" it was rather a retreat for the proud and luxurious, than the philosophic mind; like the poets, it was an Elysian only for heroes; ambition found examples there, and restless emulation fair incite-

ments, but no quiet scenes hushed the passions into peace, and excluded the visions of this world's vanities; which, I take to be the great benefit of rural retreat, which should give the mind into the guardian care, of "the cherub Contemplation." I am afraid that Mr. Bowers will lose all the pleasure he had promised himself from the neighbourhood of Wickham; he speaks with great regret of your leaving Wickham, and of having seen so little of you, when you was there. I have had the pleasure of receiving several letters from him; he is a charming correspondent, which, added to being a good companion when present, makes him a very desirable friend. Mr. Botham leaves us tomorrow, but he is to leave his little boy with me, as a pledge of his return. I am greatly delighted with the little gentleman; he has the happiest disposition I ever saw, a mind and body disposed to health, and in neither any ill humours. Sometimes, when he bestows a great many of his little endearments and caresses on me, he brings to my mind his fond

mother, who would have received them with infinite delight, but Heaven knew best.—I consider these little creatures as messengers she sends to me, to keep up the intercourse of friendship, till we meet to part no more.

I am,
my dearest Cousin's
most faithful, and affectionate friend,
E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Sandleford, the 3d of September.

I AM much obliged to my dear cousin, for his kind and agreeable letter, which gave me a higher pleasure and more intense delight, than those rural objects which employed my attention in my walks, or filled the magic lantern of my mind, in those noonday dreams, you suppose to have amused me. You are mistaken, when you imagine I send invitations to

beaux and belles, to fill the vacant apartments of my mind. True indeed, that there may be empty space enough to receive French hoops, and, from the same reason, an echo to repeat French sentiments; but there are few of the fine world whom I should invite into my mind, and fewer still, who are familiar enough there, to come unasked. I make use of these seasons of retirement and leisure, to do like the good housewives, to sweep the rooms, range the little homely furniture in order, and deck them with a little sage and other herbs of grace, as they are called, and then hope the fairies will come and visit them, and not the dull creatures of earth's mould, of whom I have enough when I am in town. But you are a welcome and a frequent guest, because you bring with you those virtues and graces, whose presence I would desire. I am pleased with your praise of Moliere, but not with your application of his Misanthrope. When virtue and wisdom live out of the world, they grow delicate, but it is too severe to call

that moroseness ; and, perhaps, they lose something of their purity, when they mix with the crowd, and abate in strength, as they improve in flexibility. There is a limit, and a short one too, beyond which human virtue cannot go ; a hair's breadth beyond the line, and it is vice. I am now satisfied of what I had before believed, (as you seem so much to admire the Misanthrope,) that it is far beyond all comedies that ever were written. The character being so entirely kept up, and the error, though every where visible, no where monstrous. The Misanthrope has the same moroseness in his love suit and his law suit ; he is as rigid and severe to a bad verse as a bad action, and as strict in a salutation in the street or address in a drawing room, as he would be in his testimony in a court of justice ; right in the principle, wrong only in the excess, you cannot hate him when he is unpleasant, nor despise him when he is absurd. When the groundwork of a character is virtuous, whatever fantastic forms or uncouth figures may be wrought upon it, it cannot appear abso-

lutely odious or ridiculous. On the contrary, where the ground is vicious, however prettily adorned or gayly coloured, set it in open day, it will be detestable; of which we have an instance in this play; we hate and despise the lively agreeable coquette, as soon as we discover her, and esteem the rigid unamiable Misanthrope. I think my young cousin can hardly have a better amusement than reading Moliere; from whose delicate wit and nice satirical touch, he will find that not only the worst passions want correction and restraint, but the best regulation. The first prayer I should make, if I had a son, would be that he might be free from vice; the second, that he might be free from absurdity, the least grain of it spoils a whole character, and I do not know any comic author more useful than Moliere, for both these purposes. Our English play writers give some vice or affectation, to all their principal characters. I am very well, and careful of my health; all people are fond of novelty and you know health is such to me, but nothing can more recommend it to me,

than thinking my welfare of consequence to you. Adieu, Cousin! I must put on a great hoop, and go three miles to dinner; how much better was our gipsy life! I believe I shall enter myself of the society at Norwood, the rather tempted to it, as I should be your neighbour. I have not heard from Mrs. Boscawen, but I am glad she had the pleasure of spending some time at Wickham.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, Thursday.

My dearest Cousin,

I CANNOT expect to hear from you while you have such agreeable company with you ; I find it is difficult to steal an hour from the embarrassments of society, but it is much more so from the agreeable engagements of friendly intercourse. You are making a full meal at the feast of reason, I am running from house to house, getting the cold scraps of visiting conversation, served up with the indelicacy and indifference of an ordinary, at which no power of the mind does the honours; the particular taste of each guest is not consulted, the solid part of the entertainment is too gross for a delicate taste, and the lighter fare insipid: I passed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in visiting fine ladies, all of a new and extraordinary turn, but I was not much entertained; each differed from every other person in the

world, but each is at all times like herself, I mean in the tone of conversation; the reverse of Mr. Pope's celebrated dame to whom he gives, "fixed principles with fancy ever new;" a praise that ever appeared to me the highest that could be given to the companion and the friend, but by fine ladies it is reversed. Indeed, Cousin, I do not love fine ladies, but I am to dine with * * * to morrow notwithstanding; she has a fund of honour and honesty, that make a good ground work of a character; there are indeed some grotesque figures embroidered upon it, that caprice and fashion have wrought there, but time may wear them out, and the skilful hand of a prudent friend may help to do it; and then much will remain that is really good. There are strong characters, which, like strong wines, ferment a great while before they grow clear, but when once the dregs are thrown off they admirably bear the change of seasons, and are found cordial to those that take them. I know you are not inclined to like * * * which perhaps induced me to trouble you

with all this impertinence upon, may I say, an impertinent subject? Pray make my compliments to Mrs. and Miss West, Sir George Lyttelton, and my Cousin.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, Wednesday 16, 1754.

My most inestimable Cousin,

I AM much more satisfied now I find that your indisposition was owing to the rencontre of salt fish, milk, and a strange olio of diet, than when I imagined it was the gout in your stomach. But pity, which sometimes subsides into soft passions, on this occasion warms and hardens into anger. Why, when an invalid, would you be so careless of your diet? However difficult it may be to the strong temper of the budge doctors of the stoic fur, to run mad with discretion,* I assure you

* Insanire certâ ratione modoque. Horace.

it is not impossible to the gentle dame in blonde lace and Paris hoop; I followed the precepts of the très-precieuse Lady Grace, and visited "soberly." I have not been out since Sunday, Mr. Montagu's cold having given me a reason for staying at home, and my indolence would have been glad even of an excuse. I did not see Sir George Lyttelton till yesterday morning, but the account he gave of your health pleased me very much. The good Dean called in the evening, and unfolded to me the horrid tale of the salt-fish and asses milk. Oh, could the milky mother, who is so often insulted, so much despised and oppressed by man, have known his perverseness of appetite would have turned her salutary milk, the effect of prudent and fit diet, into a kind of poison; how would she have animadverted upon the occasion? I dare say she would have made better observations on the different powers of reason and instinct than have been made by any philosopher on two legs. I wish I had her critique upon human reason, in black and white, with her —

modest apology for long ears and walking on four legs. I have just received Mr. Bower's third volume of the Popes, with so polite an Italian epistle, as shews he can play what note he pleases on Apollo's harp. I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Berenger on Monday morning, he has been under discipline for his eyes, but his spirits and vivacity are not abated. Pray has Mr. Birch sent you his Queen Elizabeth? I have not seen it, and I know I shall read it with sorrow. A belle passion at threescore is worse than eating salt fish in the gout. I shall hate these collectors of anecdotes if they cure one of that admiration of a great character that arises from a pleasing deception of sight. I desire you not to read aloud this part of Queen Bess's story, when the ass is at your door; it would make a bad chapter for us in her history of human reason, 60 odd to twenty-one! instinct never made such a blunder. An old woman and a young man, a sin against nature, an old queen and a young counsellor, a sin against politics and prudence. "Am-

bition should be made of sterner stuff." I shall begin to believe Madame Scudery's romances, in which Lucretia is adroit at intrigue, the stern Brutus a whining lover, and Cato the censor admirable at writing the billet doux. I cannot forgive Mr. Birch for bringing this story to light in such a manner; I supposed with Shakespeare, that, in spite of Cupid's idle darts, " she pass'd on in maiden meditation fancy free." I should have written to you before if I had not been in hopes Mr. Montagu's cold would have given me some room to flatter myself with a visit to Wickham.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

November the 5th, 1764.

My dear Cousin,

SINCE the days that Cupid set Hercules to the distaff, he has not had a nobler con-

quest, than over the elevated soul of Mr. Pitt. I congratulate you on the affinity, and I hope he will be happy: his long acquaintance with the lady makes the hazard much less, than where people marry without knowing the disposition of the person they choose. I believe Lady Hester Grenville is very good humoured, which is the principal article in the happiness of the marriage state. Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover, wit may be pernicious, and many brilliant qualities troublesome; but a companion of gentle disposition, softens cares and lightens sorrows. These sober matches made on reflection, are often happier than those made by sudden and violent passion, and I hope this will prove of that kind; and there is an authority in the character of Mr. Pitt, that will secure him the deference and obedience of his wife; proud of him abroad, she will be humble to him at home; and having said so much, I will consign them over to Hymen, who I hope will join their hands in the most auspicious hour. I was prevented writing to you by

Sunday's post, Dr. Pococke having staid with us on Saturday night, and the first Sunday of the month I always go to Newbury Church; the length of the service made me return too late to write. I am glad Mr. Cambridge has been at Wickham, though to my detriment, by having delayed your letter; but I think a person of his miscellaneous conversation an admirable visitant in the country, where the mind is apt to follow one track. I should be allured by the profession of a conjuror, who promises to shew one things past, present, and to come, a proof, you will say, of my being tainted with the vices of my mother Eve. I will confess my mind does sometimes wander after novelties, and I sit with great delight to listen to Dr. Pococke's account of many things rather strange than fine. We were in Wiltshire last week, to visit Mrs. Medows, and my love of prospects was abundantly gratified, by passing over some of the highest ground in England; but the views, though rich and extensive, were not distinct enough to be very

delightful; the rich and cultivated lands of Berkshire and Hampshire lay beneath the hill, the ground we were upon was barren, bleak, and dreary, and seemed in the disorder in which the deluge had left it; the bright and gentle element of water which enlivens and fertilizes the plains, was no where to be seen, though we looked over a vast tract of land. The hill we passed over had not even a shrub growing upon it, some sheep that seemed to be hanging on the sides, adorned it very much, but there were no farms nor villages at hand, nor any air of habitation. I was glad to leave it to "the crows and choughs that wing the midway air," especially as danger now and then shewed his frightful face, to give greater horror to the situation. The day we returned a fog hid the valley, and the winds raged on the hill, so you may imagine, that I was glad when I regained my quiet habitation. Mr. Botham arrived last night, much we said of you, but should I repeat it, you would retort upon me the words flattery and irony; he is convinced of my health

now he sees me, but he says, I look like a country Joan, and I must not shew such a jolly countenance at London, lest it should be thought that I am too grossière ever to have been sick or to have had the vapours. When my friendly wishes towards the great city will be brought about, I know not, but if I must be a Joan, I choose to be gossip Joan, for all my friend Mr. Botham: there are wars, and rumours of wars among the politicians, and that may awaken Mr. Montagu's curiosity, and we may go the sooner to hear what is going forward; that is all the part we shall have in it; like my sister idle Joan of happy memory,

“ My billet at the fire is found,
Whoever is deposed or crown'd.”

As Mr. Montagu has recovered his health here, I am determined not to say one syllable concerning London; I know what bitter reproach my mother Eve got, by tempting Adam to taste the fruit that did not agree with him; and, indeed, if he was to grow ill in town, I should reproach

myself. Miss Pitt is in town, and so I have lost all hopes of seeing her here, which is a great mortification to me. I desire you will present my congratulations to Mrs. West, on the alliance Mr. Pitt makes with your family, the friend and the relation will be happily united in him. Adieu, my post-chaise waits.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 14th of November.

My dear Cousin,

YOUR lively and agreeable letter bears no mark of the dull and gloomy month of November; I accept your greetings in my Joan-like character, but I make some doubt, whether I shall acquiesce in that of a pedlar; my disdain of it does not arise from pride, but you accuse me of the barbarous ignorance of giving gold

for bits of tin, glass beads, &c. I do not disown my esteem of trifles when they are brilliant cut, but to pay such prices for them as you mention, would only become those who have mines of gold. I am secured from this unequal traffic by my poverty of understanding, and were it much better stored, I should endeavour to carry on the commerce of conversation at an equal rate ; for envy, as well as avarice, will murder where it suspects too great a treasure. As the Virtues and Graces, as well as Cupid and Hymen, will assist at Mr. Pitt's nuptials, I think he could not choose a better place for their celebration than Wickham, their capital seat. I wish them many happy years together, and God bless them with health and every good ; so much from an honest heart in plain prose, and homely phrase ; what the Muses have to say on the occasion, we must wait to hear from you. I hope while you are at Croydon, the good Archbishop will animate you to defy that foul fiend, my Lord Bolingbroke : I believe I shall take some of Ward's sneezing

powder to clear my head of the impieties and impurities of his book. I am not satisfied with Mr. Warburton's answer, the levity shocks me, the indecency displeases me, the grossièreté disgusts me. I love to see the doctrine of Christianity defended by the spirit of Christianity. When absurdity is mixed with impiety, it ceases to be a jest. I can laugh at his Lordship's cavils at Mr. Locke, his envy to Plato, and all the old philosophers, but I could with great seriousness apply to him the words of his friend and poet, to the dunces :

'Tis yours a Bacon or a Locke to blame,
A Newton's genius, or a Milton's flame:
But oh ! with one, immortal one dispense,
The source of Newton's light, or Bacon's sense.

But I must do his Lordship the justice to say, that what he wants in faith, he makes up in confidence, for after having assured you it is absurd to affirm God is just or good, he declares he is willing to trust the being whose attributes he cannot know, to dispose of him in another

world, not at all doubting that the supreme being will be good to him, without goodness, and just to him, without justice. He laughs at the faith of Abraham, and I should do so too if Abraham had disputed God's veracity, and then trusted to his promises. I never read such a heap of inconsistencies and contradictions, such a vain ostentation of learning, and if I dared, I would say it, all that can shew, "the trifling head or the corrupted heart." I think I may venture to say trifling, for whatever does not relate to the argument, is so, and to teize the gentle reader with all the miserable sophisms that perplexed the world two thousand years ago, is barbarous. I wanted to apply to him the epigram on Hearne, the antiquarian,

Eye on thee, quoth Time to Thomas Hearne,
Whatever I forget, you learn.

As well as I love travelling, I never desire to go into Greece with Lord Bolingbroke, to the rag fair of the ancient philosophers. I thank his Lordship though, for making me once more look into Mr. Locke and

tor Clarke, in the veneration of whom
 lieve I shall live and die. I am very
 that my amiable Miss Pitt was so
 l, as to regret that she could not
 e to Sandleford. I know her tender
 ction for her brother will make her
 ice to see him so happily settled, and
 he has fixed his choice on a lady
 will make her so agreeable a sister.
 when you see Miss Pitt, say every
 g that is kind and affectionate for me,
 know you need not fear going beyond
 truth. I find that you are likely to
 at Chelsea before we get to town.
 Montagu talks to me of a wood, and
 ll of water, and a serpentine river,
 I know not what, that are quite out
 eason at present, but he does not yet
 me when we are to go to town, and I
 tired of the vegetable world.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

Hill Street, November the 23th, 1754.—

My dearest Cousin,

FROM country Joan I am, according to my ambitious views, settled into gossip Joan, and by no supernatural metamorphosing powers, but merely by the help of so ordinary a vehicle as a post chaise, which wrought this happy change between the hours of seven in the morning and five in the afternoon; the subject no doubt was well prepared that would so easily receive the alteration. In my town character I made fifteen visits last night; I should not so suddenly have assumed my great hoop if I had not desired to pay the earliest respect to Lady Hester Pitt. I came to town on Wednesday night, and was too weary to write to you, I proposed doing it on Thursday evening, but my brother Robinson hindered me by making a long visit. Yesterday morning was divided amongst milliners, mantua-makers,

mercens, and such as deal in the small wares of vanity. At night, at my return from my visits, I found your letter, and to see the dangers of any commerce with the world, and even the best people in it, I was in great danger of extreme vanity from the Archbishop of Canterbury* and Mr. West. Whose applause could be so likely to awaken it? Certainly their esteem would do me the highest honour, but extremes still bring their remedies; a desire of being approved by such persons leads to serious reflections, and makes one cast an examining glance upon oneself that ill agrees with the superficial contentments of vanity. If his Grace says any good of me, I shall be at a world of pains in endeavouring to deserve it; for his praise is one of the highest wordly rewards that merit can receive, and merit only dares to adopt it. I cannot say I am quite satisfied with you for communicating those superficial remarks I had made on Lord Bolingbroke; you know I write without care, and almost

* Dr. Herring.

without thinking; and when I correspond with you I leave out all your character, but that of the kind friend and the affectionate cousin, and pay you a sort of pepper-corn rent and acknowledgment, such as suits my circumstances, and shews my duty, but not what might be expected from paper addressed to the celebrated Gilbert West. However, as the Archbishop certainly read my letter with this key, there is no harm done, but remember that his judgment is tempered with that benevolence and gentleness rarely to be met with; and pray do not be encouraged ever to communicate any of my letters to tempers less angelic. Fame speaks with so many voices, and such confusion of report as to the changes of ministers, that I dare not repeat a word of her babble. I have always thought saying what one does not know to be true, too near of kin to the mendacious art of saying what one knows to be false, and in public and in private matters one should abstain from it. I hope we shall very soon hear of your being settled at Chelsea;

I shall often call in a morning, but it is grievous that you are quite out of the reach of an afternoon's visit, and the evenings are the best hours for society; but I believe I shall think those the best hours in which I can have your company. I am delighted when I read your account of your felicities; if my sincerest regard, esteem, and affection, may be put into the catalogue, I am still more delighted. That the great Disposer of all things may be bounteous still to give you nought but good, is my sincerest prayer; this certain comfort I have, that the pious and patient mind turns all things to benefits. When humility receives what mercy and wisdom ordain it must be well, but one cannot help wishing ones friend those things that our short-sighted ken can discern to be good in the first instance. Pray remember* Chelsea and your most affectionate

E. MONTAGU.

* Mr. Pitt made Mr. West Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

To Mrs. Scott, her Sister. -

My dear Sister,

I AM so apt to transgress as a correspondent, that I have not a new apology to put on my fault, so beg that you will cover it with charity, and always remember that want of leisure, not want of love, occasions my silence. I imagine that you will be glad to hear the history of the times, which indeed, bring forth daily wonders, nor is it the least, that the most profound arithmetician, and the greatest calculator, one who carried Demoivre's Probabilités de la vie humaine in his pocket, never foresaw that spending ten times his income, would ruin his fortune, and that he found no way to make the book of debtor and creditor even, but paying that debt, which dissolves all other obligations? You will guess I mean Lord Montfort and his pistol; he had not discovered any marks of insanity, on the contrary, all was deliberate, calm, and cool; having said

so much of his indiscretion, I think with the rest of the world, I may acquit him of the imputation of cunning and sharpening, but what can one say in defence of a conduct, that had all the appearance of deep knavery, and the consequences of inconsiderate rashness and folly? To appear much less cunning, and in reality be much more discreet, must be one's wish. Many reasons have been given for his Lordship's violent act, but by what I learn from those best acquainted with his person and fortune, he was not under the pressure of any very heavy debt, but had a true Epicurean character, loved a degree of voluptuousness that his fortune could not afford, and a splendour of life it could not supply; much of his relish for the world was lost, and like one that has no appetite to ordinary fare, he chose to rise from table, unless Fortune would make him a feast. I have entered into the particulars of this, because of all the violent deaths I have known in our days, either great difficulties, cruel disappointments, the short madness of anger, or real insanity of

mind, have been the occasion, and one can hardly imagine the great law of nature, self-preservation, should be reasoned down by the indolent persuasions of a delicate volupté. When Lord Montfort's children were paid their demands on his estate, I hear he had only twelve hundred pounds a year clear, and in table, equipage, and retinue, he equalled, and in the first article perhaps, excelled the largest fortunes. To retrench or to die was the question; he reasoned like Hamlet, but left out the great argument of a future state. I thought that at the Bath, among the multitude of reports, you might not know what was really Lord Montfort's situation. The next extraordinary affair, is a slander that has been spread of a certain great lady; it began among the servants, it circulated first amongst the vulgar, the tincture of calumny made it received for a little while in some degree among the better sort, but they soon discarded it; but it is not yet dismissed entirely by the low people, and what is unfortunate, their Graces appearance in

town together, which would have extinguished the flame, is retarded by her Grace's having been taken ill in the country within these few days. However, one must do that justice to the people of fashion, they have not any doubts of the falsehood of the report; from the first, they all said it was a lye, but now they look as if they were convinced of its being one, which candid interpretation did not shew itself in the faces of all people at the card-table a week ago. Lady Albemarle's dream of her lord taking leave of her, amused the town for a day or two, but few people's waking thoughts deserve one's attention, and the sleeping reveries are still a more trifling subject. Mr. Harris's passionate love for Nanny Conway diverts the town; they sigh to soft music at the opera together, whisper at assemblies, and are as foolish as if they were really in love. Lord Waldegrave's marriage does not proceed, whether the delay be owing to the extreme coldness of the weather, or that reason meddles where he has no business, in the decision

of a love affair, I know not. I am in hopes of seeing Lady Sandwich this week. I am much charmed with Madame de Salis, her manner, her address, her understanding, are all of the first rate, she has l'esprit orné with a great deal of knowledge of the world. I grieve to think she should return to the Switzerland mountains; she was made for polite society. Miss Charlotte Fane is in good health and spirits; we were at the opera together on Saturday, and she and Madame de Salis were with me on Monday evening. I have lately been engaged in a melancholy employment, condolence with poor Mr. and Mrs. West, on the loss of their son, who died of a bilious fever, occasioned by his want of attention to the jaundice, which attacked him in the season of plays and operas, and he preferred them to the care of his health; he died very suddenly: the poor parents received the blow with surprising patience.

Mr. Lyttelton is going to South Carolina as governor, and his sister dreading such a separation, desires to accompany him,

and is preparing for the voyage. Pray have you read Mr. Hume's History of James the 1st and Charles the 1st. I am afraid it will rather promote Jacobitism, but it is entertaining and lively, and will amuse you.

If at Bath you live a life of reason, amusement in reading will not be recommendation enough, and indeed till all the classic authors have been thoroughly studied, it is wrong to throw away one's time upon books that afford very little real instruction; but I cannot help picking up the mushrooms of the day. As Lord Albemarle had a champignon undigested in his stomach, some will be found as crude in my head, if my executors should open it; but as there is no treasure there, I hope they will not indulge such an idle curiosity. I suppose you know there are two volumes of Madame Sevigné's Letters come out this winter; they are amusing, as the anecdotes of a person one has a regard for, but they were rejected in former editions, as not being so brilliant as those published before. I do not hear of any

thing new from Paris, but a novel of Crebillon's, which I am told is not very decent. Fred. Montagu studies the law with great application, and left the University of Cambridge with an extraordinary character. My brother Robinson is emulating the great Diogenes, and other hudge doctors of the Stoic fur; he flies the delights of London, and leads a live of such privacy and seriousness as looks to the beholder like wisdom, but for my part, I think no life of inaction deserves that name. As mock sable, so is mock wisdom the darker of the two, and by that deceives the injudicious. My best compliments to Lady Bab. Pray take care of your health; mine continues surprisingly good, and I am grown so fat and so young, as surprises all my acquaintance. My brother Morris dined here on Saturday, he is very well, as is also our friend Charles. Miss Furnese is to be married to Mr. Dering in about a fortnight. Sir Edward is very happy in it. I wish my bad example as a correspondent may not influence you; it is always a great

pleasure to me to hear of my dear sister;
may many happy years attend you.

I am, my dear,
your most affectionate sister,
and sincere friend,

E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

June the 26th, 1755.

I know not any thing that can so agreeably enliven my leisure, as a letter from my dear Cousin, nor any thing that would so much disturb my tranquillity, as alarms for his health. From peace and leisure, the third blessing, health, is to arise, so by writing to me often, you may help to effect your good wishes. You bid me not regret your not seeing me in London on the Monday, the time is past, the opportunity lost, and therefore wisdom and you, say very well I should not waste time in vain regret; but friendship and I say,

that a meeting for friends that are to be so long asunder, is not so slightly passed over, and that I cannot help regretting, that these hours were not spent with you, though they are now as much lost in the vast ocean of eternity, as those the antediluvians spent with their cousins; but the memory has its treasury, and so tenacious is its nature, it can fix the fleeting moments, or recal them at pleasure. I am rejoiced to hear that health sits down to dinner with you every day; while she is your attendant, I shall think her my friend, whether she visits me or not, indeed she has been very good to me ever since I came hither; I have made her lady of my bed-chamber, and she calls me up before seven, and puts me to bed at eleven. I wonder at your good Admiral, who could not sleep in a quiet house; I have known many people who could not keep awake in one; but I assure you I preserve all my vivacity and good spirits, though I am deep embosomed in tranquillity. Mr. Montagu has been studiously disposed ever since we came to

Sandleford, so that I pass seven or eight hours every day entirely alone. Five months are to pass, before I return to the land of the living, but I can amuse myself in the regions of the dead: if it rains so that I cannot walk in the garden, Virgil will carry me into the Elysian fields, or Milton into Paradise. Writers of more sacred inspiration offer a nobler prospect, and when every animal is chearfully running its little circle, shall that called rational, to whom only it is given to look back to remote ages, and forward to future existence, who has the resources of recollection and expectation, be discontented and ill-humoured? How many powers must we neglect! how many mercies must we forget, before we fall into melancholy! hence, loathed melancholy! I will have none of it. I hear that the Squire of Dames has at last found a Florimel worthy of the matrimonial vows; I wish him all happiness; he has delicacy enough to make him very happy or very miserable, and restlessness enough to be very uneasy in a state too insipid to allow

of neither; if Miss Scudamore (for that is her name,) has as many amiable qualities as our friend, they may be extremely happy. I could not hear any thing particular concerning her character or fortune, but only that she had been handsome, and it was on both sides a marriage of inclination.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Wickham, 1st of July, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

I HAD begun a letter to you yesterday, but was hindered from proceeding in it, by a visit from the Archbishop, who came to bless our expedition to Tunbridge; for the good wishes of a good man, are to be considered as benedictory prayers. I rejoice to learn that you enjoy so truly the blessings of the country, health, peace,

and leisure ; which though inferior to the nobler and more animated pleasures of the town, derive some kind of value from change and variety, and serve like shades, to set off and heighten the more luminous and more important objects in the perspective picture of human life, and are perhaps, physically necessary to recruit the mind and body with a fresh supply of animal spirits, to enable it to go through the bustling idleness, or *strenua inertia*, of the town-campaign ; for which as you are so admirably qualified by nature and inclination, I would fain have you as completely armed, and as amply provided. I much approve, therefore, of your diligence in furnishing your magazines with large stores of ammunition of all sorts for conversation, from authors of various kinds ; among which, as your victories will give occasion to many rejoicings, I hope you will not fail to provide a good quantity of French squibs and crackers ; you had, if you have not wasted it, a sufficient store of wild-fire of your own. I approve likewise, of your taking a walk now and

then with Milton in his Paradise, it is a fine resource now you are at such a distance from Kensington Gardens, and may serve to amuse your taste for natural philosophy, by presenting you with some exotics, both plants and flowers. As to Virgil's Elysium, though I own there is a great deal of good company to be met with in his fortunate groves and myrtle woods; yet I must take the liberty to caution you against what he calls his *Lugentes Campi*, the air of which seems to have a melancholy effect, though it is often not felt immediately at the first entrance. You have indeed set melancholy at defiance; but have a care, she is a subtle foe, and generally attacks by stealth and at unawares. The *Campi Lugentes*, though they make part of Elysium, make, at the same time, a part of her territories. And now, as I perceive you are in a right way, I shall add no more but my wishes, that you may proceed happily in your course, and arrive in due time full of health, and spirits, and alacrity, at that other Paradise described by Milton, under

the fictitious and opprobrious name, of the Limbo of Vanity, to which all choice spirits, especially of the fair sex, direct their coaches and post-chaises, with the utmost impatience, to find their jewels, their hoops, their pompons, &c. and all the various pleasures, which were lost to them during their residence in earth, in that dull clod, the country.

We set out next Thursday for Tunbridge. Lady Cobham and Harriet come here to-morrow, that we may travel together, and dine with Lady Lambert in our way. I hope to meet at Tunbridge a novelty, which I think I never met there but once, viz. a letter from you. Though, to say truth, I had much rather meet you there in person, for it is the oddness of my temper, to love to see an old friend, better than a new acquaintance. Pardon me, Madam, for declaring so unfashionable a taste, to so polite a lady. But you are now in the country, and at leisure to admit and entertain your friends, the chief of whom (I say the *chief*, for conscious honesty is sometimes proud,) professes to be, with

an unpolite sincerity, but with the polite
addition of, *with the utmost respect,*

my dearest Cousin,
most faithfully and most affectionately
yours,

GIL. WEST.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

The 3d of July, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

THOUGH good wishes from under a lawn
handkerchief, may not be so beneficial as
benedictions laid on your head by lawn
sleeves, yet as my zeal for your health is
equal to that of the best of Archbishops,
I will send you my most earnest wishes,
that the Tunbridge waters may do you all
imaginable service. If I were to tell you
I cannot hear of your being at Tunbridge
without wishing myself there, such is
your disposition to believe me fond of
crouds and assemblies; you would think

I disguised my desire, to be at the rooms and walks, *sous le nom d'amitié*, but comment on my text as you please, when I hear you are at Tunbridge, I shall wish to be there. Pray tell me who has the white stone-house, where the rites of hospitality and all the sweet civilities of life, were so nobly performed by Mr. Pitt. I shall be sorry to hear it is prophaned by the residence of some tallow-chandler, brazier, or pewterer, or some man of quality, who, compared to Mr. Pitt, may be brass or pewter, or metal of base alloy. I am diverted to see you think me equally unreasonable, whether I amuse myself in society or solitude; you do not find in me that spirit of repining and dislike, which is the fashionable livery of extraordinary merit. I know that persons of delicacy can be pleased only with some particular system of life; for my own part, I have endeavoured always to move easily and chearfully on the sphere I am placed in. There are few situations that do not allow of some pleasures, and I am always ready to take such as offer, though they may

not be of the sort I should choose. I could be glad to enjoy the conversation of some agreeable friends here, such absolute solitude is not to my taste, but what then! shall I not endeavour to be as happy as I can, because I may not be as happy as I would? so, my dear Cousin, with your leave, I will amuse myself with books and such pleasures as the country affords, and in November, most willingly return to London; not for reasons so absurd as you are pleased to honour me with, but that really after five months of the most serious retirement, I shall be glad to return to the chearful joys of society, and if you add, to the idle dissipations of town in some degree, I acquiesce; an opera, a play, a burletta, an assembly, are all good in their turn, and if ever you see me affect to be too wise for them, I beg you to intimate that such wisdom can become my mind, no better than Leotard's great beard would my face. I hope you will meet with an agreeable set of company at Tunbridge, and the weather seems to promise well. By

your letter, which I received last night, I understand that you are to set out to-day; pray let me know how you pass your time, and what parties you fall into; fine weather will give me the greater satisfaction, as it is a pleasure you will partake with me; the beginning of this week would have been unpleasant at the Wells, where dry weather is necessary. By your taking no notice of what I said concerning Mr. Torriano's marriage, I presume you were before informed of it, or did the hoops and pompons which have taken violent possession of your imagination, drive it out of your mind. Pray, Cousin, had not one better wear pompons on the outside, than in the inside of one's head? let me beg that you will drive them out of your memory, till I direct my post chaise to London to visit them. I desire my compliments to Mrs. West, Lady Cobham, and Miss Speed.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Montagu, from Gilbert West, Esq.

Tunbridge Wells, 9th of July, 1755.

My dear Cousin,

I SHALL make no apology for delaying these three posts to return an answer to your letter. Your own example will justify me to you, an example to me always of the greatest authority, especially when it happens to fall in with my own way of thinking, who, from my natural or acquired aversion to writing letters, or indolence, as I know you will term it, look upon the necessity of answering the letters of one's friends, as an additional burden to the many grievances of absence. The case, I am sensible, is very different with you, whose tongue is the pen of a ready writer, or rather, whose pen is the tongue of a ready and an eloquent speaker. You therefore may well be distressed, when you have not the excuse of sickness or some great disaster, to plead for not writing so punctually as you ought, and

are qualified by nature as well as habit to do. As for the life I now lead here, it affords so little variety, and is so very dull and uniform, that I cannot pick out any incidents that can yield you entertainment. It is in almost every circumstance very different from that I have ever lived before upon Mount Ephraim, for this reason, I avoid bringing them into a comparison; and therefore try my utmost to banish from my memory every idea of times past; and to separate from every object round about me, all those associations from which I once imagined I should always be able to derive pleasure; but experience has taught me, that it is not always agreeable to recollect past joys; and you have called upon me to reflect, that there are few situations that do not allow of some pleasures, and that to be willing and ready to take those that offer, is the happiest disposition of mind. Adieu then, the happy seasons of 1750, 51, 52, and 53, come no more to disquiet and sadden 1755. She pretends not to compare her joys with your's; yet she offers

health, tranquillity, and content. I hope you will for the future make no more inquiries, that may lead my imagination back to past times. When I pass along Mount Ephraim, and see the stone-house, &c. I think not of Mr. Pitt, &c. but consider it as belonging to Mr. Walpole and Lady Rachel, persons with whom I have no concern, and so pass careless on to the well, drink my waters, then, perhaps, take a turn round the common, go upon the walks; make my bows to half a dozen ladies, and say half a dozen words to each of them; and if I can, select some to converse with; among these, I find none so agreeable as your friend Mrs. Vesey, who arrived at Tunbridge the day we came, and took occasion soon after to begin a conversation with me, by inquiring after you; since that time we are become acquainted, and seem to like one another very well; I imagine for the same reason, namely, because we both love and honour you. We both agree in wishing you here; which wish she often expresses in asking me, whether I cannot prevail upon you to come? to which when I sadly answer no, she

sighs, and we part ; that thought making us both unfit for any further conversation. I sometimes, in society with Bishop Gilbert and his daughter,* lament the fate of our poor friend Torriano. Miss Scudamore has the character of a good, as well as of a pretty woman ; but she has but very little money, which will put them under the necessity of living altogether in Herefordshire, a circumstance which his friends will have reason to lament however it may fare with him—but this subject wakes my memory to past pleasures, which I do my utmost to avoid. Torriano settled in Herefordshire for life ; and you for six months in Berkshire ; The two princincipal acquisitions of Tunbridge in the year 1750 ! wonder not that I break off so abruptly—I cannot be in a fitter disposition to assure you, that

I am, my dearest Cousin,
most warmly and most sincerely your
most affectionate friend,

GIL. WEST.

* Afterwards Countess of Mount Edgcumbe.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

The 13th of July.

My dearest Cousin,

NEVER was good doctrine more thrown away and wasted, than all your letter said concerning the vanity of regretting past years and past pleasures ; for shall I own my hardness of heart ? even while I read your letter, I was regretting those hours in which I used to hear you talk ; and yet there is no hour of your absence in which I regret the loss of your company so little, as that in which I receive a letter from you. I try to acquiesce in my situation, but you may be assured I cannot be much pleased with it, though chearful spirits and an easy temper can bear solitude, yet is it possible not to wish for conversation in which one finds delight and improvement ? I regret your absence as you would wish your friend to do, but I bear it as you expect of your disciple, and endeavour

to imitate the patience and fortitude I admire in you. You cannot imagine that I should not be glad to come to Tunbridge, where I have always improved my stock of health, and have acquired such valuable friends; the manner of life there too, was very agreeable to me, but Mr. Montagu is happier here, and I ought to make his happiness my principal object. My constitution is not so strong, that it would not receive benefit by the waters, but I cannot say I am ill, and must content myself with the advantages of air and exercise which this situation affords. I have not any person in the neighbourhood whose conversation can give me a moment's amusement. Last Tuesday Mr. Botham came hither, as did also a Dr. Gregory, an ingenious agreeable man. Mr. Botham left us yesterday, the other will stay some days longer. I am to go to Hatchlands to Mrs. Boscawen, on Thursday, and shall stay a week; you may suppose I am very happy to have leave for this expedition, and shall pass my time

very agreeably with our amiable Mrs. Boscawen, and you will often be the subject of our discourse. I am glad to hear the Bishop of London is at Tunbridge, as he has always found benefit there. His Lordship and Mrs. Sherlock are so valuable and respectable, there is no merit in having gratitude towards them, and I am not sure that my regard for the Bishop is as Mr. Botham's patron; pray exhort him daily to publish the rest of his divine sermons. I am glad you are acquainted with Mrs. Vesey, she is a very amiable agreeable woman, and has an easy politeness that gains one in a moment, and in reserve she has good sense and an improved mind, to keep up the approbation she acquired by her manners. She is so entirely polite, that it is a wonder if one ever reflects, that she is polite at all, her behaviour "shews no part of study but the grace." I am sorry for our friend Torriano's match, not only as the world will lose him, but as he is to lose the world, which with all its faults, is not to

be entirely quitted. Man and wife should always have something to charge with their ennui. The impertinence of society bears the blame very well, in solitude they must accuse each other of all they suffer of it. I do not understand why they should live in Herefordshire, unless they are very fond of cyder, for in my opinion, London is the best place for people of moderate circumstances. In the country, people are respected merely according to the acres they possess; an equipage is necessary, and company must be entertained at a great expense; a small house, and very few servants and a private table, will do in London, and society may be had on easy terms. Poor Torri will hate his wife and golden pippins, in a year's residence in Herefordshire. I am afraid his friend Stillingfleet has left Herefordshire, and the ordinary conversation of country gentlemen will not amuse him. I desire my best compliments to Mrs. West, and acknowledgments to Mrs. Vesey for her remembrance of me. My compliments

are due to Mr. and Mrs. Dowding, and the smiling missy.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

P.S. Since I wrote this, Miss Pitt arrived here, to my great joy; we are to go together to Hatchlands on Thursday.

To her Husband.

Hatchlands, Friday July, 1755.

My Dearest,

I SHOULD be very sorry if I thought you did not regret my absence, and am uneasy whenever I think you do. We were received by Mrs. Boscawen with the most joyful welcome, and we found her in great spirits, on account of the taking of the two French men of war. Mr. Hoquart had been taken twice by Mr. Boscawen in the last war, but did not surrender himself in this engagement, till 44 men were killed on board of his ship. Mr. Boscawen

writes, that he lives at great expense, having 11 French officers at his table, whom he entertains with magnificence; and there were eight companies of soldiers on board the Alcide and the Lys. I hope as Admiral Holborn has joined Mr. Boscawen, we may soon hear of a more considerable victory. As we have let slip the dogs of war, I am for pursuing the advantage, our sailors are animated with their success, and their's must be discouraged. The Duke* declares himself well pleased with Mr. Boscawen for this enterprise, some people imagine the more wary (I must not say timid) disposition of the Duke of Newcastle, may make him receive the news with less pleasure. Mr. Boscawen wrote to Lord Anson, that not being able to prevent the French from landing their troops by any other method, he was obliged to take this, but was very much concerned that the Dauphin (which had chests of arms, and some say silver on board,) had escaped by means of a fog. Mrs. Boscawen is every hour receiving

* Of Cumberland.

letters or messages of congratulation on Mr. Boscawen's success; he has done enough to keep him from the resentment of the populace, but I hope he will perform something more considerable for the advantage of his country, and his own reputation. We suppose his orders were discretionary, for if they had been positive to attack, he needed not to have apologised for the action to Lord Anson and the Regency, and if he had acted contrary to his orders, he must have apologised more humbly: however, it recommends him to the mob, that he is thought to have acted contrary to orders, for vulgar minds look on disobedience to superiors, as the noblest effort of courage, and a man who can fight the French, and defy the ministry, is a demi-god in their opinions. Mr. Boscawen said in his last letter, that he hoped he should hear I had been at Hatchlands.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, the 27th July, 1755.

I AM so ashamed that I cannot plead a broken arm, or some terrible disease or unhappy disaster, as the reason of my not thanking you for the favour of your last kind and obliging letter, that I hardly rejoice in the perfect health I am in. Your letter found me at Hatchlands, rejoicing with our amiable friend, on her husband's success in the West Indies; as there is as much of honour, as tenderness in her disposition, she is very happy on this occasion. I spent nine days at Hatchlands, but we were so continually engaged in walking about the park, or seeing places in the neighbourhood, that I had not time to write a long letter to my dear Cousin, and could I think of writing a short answer to a letter which deserved so much grateful acknowledgments? I know that you will be glad to hear Mrs. Boscawen has a pretty place; the house

is situated in the middle of a paddock, which consists of only an hundred acres, but the trees are so well disposed, the ground so happily shaped, the prospects so chearful, the verdure so fine, it makes a most pleasing pastoral scene; it was much animated by the hay-makers, and would have made, well delineated, a proper frontispiece to Milton's Allegro. I could not help pitying Mr. Boscawen, whom honour obliged to change this scene of peace and plenty, and to quit his amiable and chearful companion, for the stern trade of war, the rough and treacherous element of the sea, and all the incumbrances and embarrassment of a considerable command: but I think the Odyssey tells us, the Syrens' notes of pleasure and soft repose, are not so tempting, as the voice that speaks of glory and renown. It is happy for us, who desire to idle life away in the vale of peace, that honour has such enchantments, and calls forth the bravest spirits to "seek the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth." Two regiments of the French

service, and many of their best engineers, are taken in the Alcide and the Lys. A fog, if we speak of second causes, but rather that over-ruling Power, who gives not always the race to the swift, or the battle to the strong, preserved the Dauphin, on board of which, they say, there were many chests of arms; Monsieur Hoquart made a gallant defence, but at last, de bonne grace surrendered to Mr. Boscawen, by whom he had been twice taken in the last war. Mr. Boscawen had only two men killed on board his ship, the French surrendering at the firing of his first gun. Monsieur Mirepoix threatened us at his departure, with la guerre la plus sanglante qui fut jamais, but by his *depit*, I imagine the French would have been better pleased, if we would have let them silently and quietly have possessed themselves of the West Indies, their address being greater than their bravery. This successful beginning has raised the courage of the people to a great height, but their courage is rather petulant than lasting, and the burden of taxes and change

of fortune, will soon make them weary of the war they are so impatient to commence: for my part, I am always sorry when the delirium of ambition runs so high as to require bleeding. I know nothing of the state of nations and the interests of princes, but it seems strangely against the general interests of mankind, to be cutting one another's throats, and I wonder that the great of this world, who are indeed the proprietors of all, should choose rather to reap the "iron harvest of the field," than the rich gifts of golden Ceres. Much better might Shakespear have said of the method of gathering laurels on the dangerous steeps and rocks of ambition, dreadful trade! than of picking samphire on the cliff. Mrs. Boscawen and Miss Pitt expressed many thanks for the kind things you said of them; we often wished we could snatch you off the pantiles, and place you with us in the rural scene of Hatchlands. We are now in the glooms of November, but my amiable Miss Pitt enlivens my situation. I am extremely rejoiced that the Bishop of

London animates you in your undertaking, I hope you will persevere, and I doubt not of your doing good to others, and honour to yourself.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

The 10th of August, 1755.

I THINK it highly reasonable that I should give you two letters for one; your words and your time are double, at least, the value of mine, but in so blank a life as I lead, what can I find to fill a letter? the history of idle Joan in prose, would be very dull, and I cannot write verse. I am afraid that every post should bring Miss Pitt an account, that Lady Hester and Mr. Pitt are returned to Sunning-hill, and I must part with her; I shall find a great loss of her; it is some consolation to me, that you will be a gainer by it, if Mr. Pitt keeps to his intention of spend-

ing some time at Wickham. I love, honour, and admire Miss Pitt more every day; she is very amiable and extremely good. She accommodates herself to the dull manner of life we lead here, and is always chearful and good humoured, she has great honour and esteem for Mr. West, and who has not? but he has nervous complaints, and therefore I am not happy when I think of him. I approve of our friend Torriano's design of living in London, I am sure the Herefordshire scheme would not have answered; I wish there was more money between them, for Cupid is an idle god, and does not love economy and domestic cares. Surely there is not any thing more risible than an old batchelor and an old maid after twenty coquetteries, promising eternal love and constancy. I suppose he addressed Miss Scudamore, as Waller does his mistress,

Phillis, let not you and I enquire,
 What has been our past desire,
 On what shepherds you have smiled,
 Or what nymphs I have beguiled.

But take advice of present love, and hope by Hymen's sober assistance, it will last for life. I hope he has made a prudent choice, he has all the good sense and delicacy necessary to direct him. He has had no views of interest, but passion has its delusion; however, I imagine he has chosen a woman of merit, and she cannot have proposed to herself any thing but domestic happiness, for their circumstances and situation exclude all other views; so far it seems to be an holy union, and I heartily wish he may be happy, for he has a great deal of merit.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Mrs. Anstey.

Sandleford, the 26th August, 1755.

Dear Madam,

As I shall rarely have your example to plead in justification of a fault, I am determined to make use of it in my

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apology for not writing; though I will own I am guilty of some prevarication in this defence of myself, for if my manner of life had not been such as allowed me very little leisure, I should not have so long delayed writing to my friend. Mrs. Boscawen and your humble servant, were not at all satisfied with your letters, though very ingenious, polite, and agreeable; because we thought something still more ingenious, polite, and agreeable, might have come in their stead. Our society wanted nothing but Mrs. Anstey, to be perfectly happy. We found Mrs. Boscawen in great joy, at Mr. Boscawen's success in the West Indies, every hour brought letters or messages of congratulation; these things added, if possible, to her good humour, wit, and vivacity, and the hours danced away with down upon their feet, as the poet expresses it. When the weather was fine, we passed the day in Hatchlands park. Miss Pitt sung several songs suited to the place. And Mrs. Boscawen knowing my passion for seeing fine places, carried me to Mr. Weston's,

Sir John Evelyn's, and Mr. Hamilton's; the last of which I think Miss West and you visited in your return from Portsmouth. I do not know whether it was then in its vernal pride, and I rather imagine from the season of the year, and your silence about it, it did not appear in so great beauty as when we saw it. I think it is a most agreeable place to live in; there may be others which have in a higher degree any one of the perfections there, but surely there is not any, where so many meet; like a well accomplished companion, it has something to please one in every disposition, and from variety of talents never wearies; and while it thus indulges the present fancy, or presents various charms, it seems not the effect of art or studious complacency, but as if it followed its natural disposition; nothing is forced, nothing seems artificial, but art has been only to the place, what education is to a happy genius; there has been improvement, but no violence to nature. Mr. Weston's is a charming place in a different cast, a fine down adorned with

noble beeches, which fringe the sides of the hills ; a rich, gay, extended prospect, and great flocks of sheep feeding, make it a fit abode for an Arcadian prince ; all its beauties are *champêtre*. Sir John Evelyn's is a venerable respectable place ; the house and furniture remain as left by the famous planter, John Evelyn, and it put me in mind of the old song of an old courtier of the queen's ; it has a good old library full of good old books ; rooms of decent state, no modern foppery or modern luxury ; the woods are very fine, and encompass a small valley, in which there are a great many black cattle feeding, and the fine verdure refreshed by a little stream, makes it very pretty and pleasing ; the woods are solemn, some parts of them so sombre, as " to hide you from day's garish eye," in others, day light mitigated by shade is received, and your eye is amused by little openings into the valley ; but Mr. Evelyn was a studious philosophic man, and he seems to have dedicated the place to contemplation, and has not courted those objects that might dissipate

the mind. One must own to the honour of former times, that they seemed not to think it necessary the mind should be constantly called forth from itself, and sure there was more of dignity in that, than in our present manners, when people cannot live out of a comedy, a puppet-shew, or a raree-shew: some arts one should imagine to have been imported from Lillyput, and to have been the sport of older children. I spent nine days at Hatchlands, Miss Pitt returned hither with me, and I did not lose the pleasure of her society till Thursday last; you know her so well, I need not tell you it was a great mortification to me to part with her. She is gone to Sunning-hill to her brother. We went every day some little excursion, to see such places or prospects as I thought worth her attention in this part of the world, the rest of our time was divided between reading and walking, à la mode de Sandlesford. I do not know exactly when we shall go to my sister at Bath Easton, for I do not propose to leave poor Travile as long as she

continues in this life ; her end draws very near. A life of innocence and mortifications, have taught her to meet death with great Christian fortitude, that is, not with philosophical pride and arrogant contempt, but as an awful change, where mercy holds forth the most precious hopes ; I go to her several times in a day, and our conversation chiefly turns on her present circumstances. I think there is no flattery more pernicious nor unseasonable, than that often used to the departing. As human nature shrinks at death, one is not to tell people there is absolutely no hope of life ; but it is wrong too, not to let them perceive their danger ; I do not mean that a life of guilt may be altered by a deathbed-repentance, but as resignation to the will of God we are assured is a pleasing sacrifice, it is wrong not to let people know their danger, that by patient acquiescence and chearful submission, they may offer that acceptable sacrifice ; and surely there is nothing that can us people under the languor of sickness, like the hopes of so happy a

change. I am very glad to see her in all respects so fitly tempered for this great event; indeed I never saw greater composure; some seriousness it ought to give to be soon to appear before Him, in whose sight no one living shall be justified, but thank God here are no terrors, no longings after recovery, but all resignation and submission: I am in hopes she will have little pain in the transition, as she is so much worn out. Her sister being with her, is a great comfort to her. Please to mention when you favor me with a letter, if Mr. Marsham has received benefit by the sea water; one cannot know Lord and Lady Romney personally or by character, and not be interested for them. I make no apology for the length of my letter, for friendship sanctifies babble, and it is with the tenderest and most sincere regard

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To Gilbert West, Esq.

Sandleford, September the 26th, 1755.

My most valuable Friend,

YOUR last letter gave me very great joy, as it assured me of the amendment of your health, and the prosecution of your great design. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required; of talents, and of leisure, and of reputation you have a great deal, and all these should be used to the honour of the giver, and the good of mankind. As a lay man, you cannot be suspected of interest in the cause, and as a scholar and a man of wit, are not liable to the imputation of blind superstition; you have every thing to animate you to the undertaking, every thing that can promise success to it. In vain speculations and idle productions of wit, if an author does not please the world, his labour is lost; but in this case, the very intention cannot miss of its reward. How narrow is the sphere, and how short the

duration of us ordinary mortals? "our time a moment, and a point our space," but it is not so with those who can instruct and improve mankind, extend their influence to distant ages and distant nations; "who being dead yet speak," serve as examples to those who have never seen them, and make their retirement useful and glorious. I grieve with you, at the depredations of time upon the Bishop of London's person, it will be long before it shall impair his works; his reward for them, I hope, will be eternal. There is something mortifying to human pride, to see a great genius drooping with age, in step, gesture, and in articulation, approaching to a second infancy. If experience did not teach one otherwise, one should imagine these master spirits of the world, were snatched away in fiery chariots or whirlwinds, but alas! "they creep on their petty pace" to the grave like the rest of the world; their superior comforts arise only from the life they look back upon. I am sorry that you have not found some agreeable society to amuse

you at Tunbridge; dissipation is reckoned good for the health and spirits, but pleasant employment I believe to be better for both; you will wonder at this sentiment from me, but I seek dissipation because I am good for nothing else; if I knew how to be useful, I should like it better. Miss Pitt went to Sunning-hill last Thursday, you may imagine that I was very sorry to lose so agreeable and amiable a friend. I went with her as far as Reading, and did every thing to make a day, that was to do me so much harm, give me a little amusement. We dined in the garden of the inn, from whence there is a fine gay prospect, and after dinner we walked to see the ruins of the old abbey, which was most delightfully situated. The river winds about the richest meadows I ever saw; hills crowned with wood, and adorned by some gentlemens' houses bound the prospect, and make it the most soft and agreeable landscape imaginable; but idleness and content cannot dwell together, luxury first debauched, then ambition seduced the monks; they were

driven from their convent, and the building is totally demolished, the walls serve only to support some fine ivy and shelter owls, who, like the former inhabitants, owe the veneration paid to them to their sequestered life. But why should I depreciate the monastic life? neither monk nor owl can be more retired than I am at present, and I inhabit a convent too, and live by rules, not given indeed by a St. Francis or St. Benedict, but by myself, merely that I may seem to have a reason for what I do. I allot seasons for exercise, for reading, writing, &c. &c. that I may not get into a habit of indolence. As all states have their temptations, solitude has its dæmon of indolence, the most harmless devil I will allow, but such as in time, makes great depredations upon the mind, and steps between us and our best purposes. I have always endeavoured to keep the same degree of spirits in every situation, and my mind is amphibious, and can subsist in different elements. Had I been a Catholic, it would have puzzled my confessor to have found out what was

penance to me. He would perhaps have sent me into the country, shaded me with cypress, yew, and fir trees in an old monastery, placed me out of the reach of any agreeable society, and bade me stay there from June to November; he would have expected to have seen me wan, meager, woe-begone. No such matter—I should have come forth again plump, smiling, debonair, and in this condition do I hope to see you in November next; I shall then have been here about five months, and I can drink no more of this sort of life at a draught, it is as much as I can promise to swallow without making wry faces. I am sure Mrs. Vesey will be impatient for her return to England, to profit by the acquaintance she has made with you.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

September the 28th, 1755.

My dear Cousin,

I AM sorry that the gout, by the frequency and length of his visits, behaves with the familiarity of an intimate acquaintance, though he was never introduced to you by his proper introducer, intemperance; however, you have therefore to oppose to him the great conquerors of pain, Patience and Fortitude. I heartily wish that good Lady Langham may come to Wickham, a delay of three quarters of a year will appear long to the impatience of maternal love: yet I dare say she will be better pleased to wait for the pleasure of seeing you till next summer, than that you should run the hazard of your health in this season, which is so unusually damp and cold. I had heard of poor governor Lyttelton's catastrophe only from the public papers, till Miss Pitt gave me a more particular account of it. I am very sorry for his

disappointment, and the loss that may attend it, if the French should think fit to detain the Blandford; but my country neighbours assure me, we are going to make up matters with the French, and if that be true, he may then proceed on his voyage without hazard. You do great honour to my penetration, when you imagine I can dive into the councils of the French, of ministerial men, and fine ladies; I believe the schemes of all these are open to the researches of those who know where to look for them, but we who live in retirement, either seek for them too near the surface, or too deep; where we imagine profound wisdom, we dig very deep for the motive, and sometimes get many fathoms below it: where we do not imagine schemes of such profundity, we think all must lie uncovered on the very surface, and again we are deceived. I should have little to animate me in this search, for the wisdom of statesmen would be of little use to me, if I could find it; one might keep it, as the virtuosi do the natural ore, in a cabinet;

but such as is coined for ordinary use, would be of more service to me. I shall envy Miss Pitt when she is with my friends at Wickham, and my friends at Wickham, when they have Miss Pitt.

I am, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

To the Same.

October the 16th, 1755.

My dearest Cousin,

I BEGGED your fair and amiable guest to make my apology for not writing to you at my return to Sandeford. The hurry I was in at Bath Easton, did not allow me to give you any account of the state of my friends there, and of the regular life they lead; I think you will allow it to be a life of reason; but within the sphere of Bath, fashion usually gives the tone, so that I wish the ladies were established in the country, that they might pursue a manner

of life which most people will approve, but very few will commend. My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sits down to cut out and prepare work for twelve poor girls, whose schooling they pay for; to those whom she finds more than ordinarily capable, she teaches writing and arithmetic herself. The work these children are usually employed in, is making childbed-linen and clothes for poor people in the neighbourhood, which Lady Bab Montagu and she, bestow as they see occasion. Very early on Sunday morning these girls, with twelve little boys whom they also send to school, come to my sister and repeat their catechism, read some chapters, have the principal articles of their religion explained to them, and then are sent to the parish church. These good works are often performed by the Methodist ladies in the heat of enthusiasm, but thank God, my sister's is a calm and rational piety. Her conversation is lively and easy, and she enters into all the reasonable pleasures of society; goes

frequently to the plays and sometimes to balls, &c. They have a very pretty house at Bath for the winter, and one at Bath Easton for the summer; their houses are adorned by the ingenuity of the owners, but as their income is small, they deny themselves unnecessary expenses. My sister seems very happy, it has pleased God to lead her to truth, by the road of affliction; but what draws the sting of death and triumphs over the grave, cannot fail of healing the wounds of disappointment. Lady Bab Montagu concurs with her in all these things, and their convent,* for by its regularity it resembles one, is really a very chearful place. They wanted me very much to stay with them till the meeting of the Parliament, that I might avoid the shock of seeing poor Travile's death, and the melancholy her illness had cast over this place; I could not prevail on myself to give poor Travile such an intimation she was burthensome.

* Mrs. Scott's Novel of Millennium Hall, presents a picture of a sort of conventual family of ladies, united for benevolent and social purposes.

Mrs. Anstey generously intends to come into this melancholy house, to stay with me till we go to town for the meeting of the Parliament. I do not find that Mr. Montagu intends going sooner. He is never in a hurry to change place ; for my own part I am thoroughly tired of the country, and should be glad to leave it as soon as poor Travile is released ; but as I can endure this sort of life without being out of humour or out of spirits, I shall acquiesce very quietly. Perhaps you will think this arises from stupid insensibility ; but I assure you, I have a lively and tender self-love, very sensible to what regards my pleasure ; but as Mr. Montagu has an undoubted right to choose what place he shall be in, I feel it most fit and proper to sit here to listen to the winter's wind all day, and the hooting of owls all the evening. I have lately acquired the constant society of a screech-owl, who has taken up its residence under my dressing room window, and utters such a number of melancholy notes, I have been tempted to ask it, whether it stays

in the country against its inclination. When Miss Anstey arrives, she will interrupt my tête-à-tête with the screech-owl, which now lasts several hours every evening.

I am, &c. &c.

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

~~Dr.~~ Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Gilbert West, says, " he was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction, which produced his Dissertation on St. Paul.

" These two illustrious friends for a while listened to the blandishments of infidelity; and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of new objections against Christianity; and as infidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a methodist. Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence, than it was thought proper to allow him.

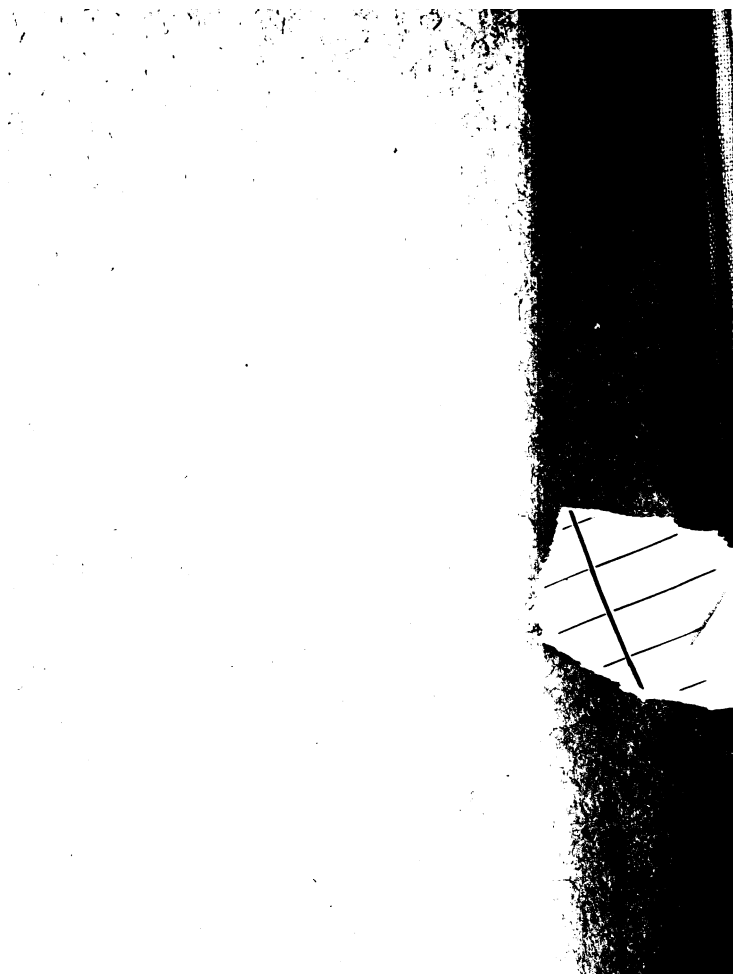
"In time, however, his revenue was increased; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council, 1752; and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

"He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed; nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after, March 26th, a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave, one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors."

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Handwritten notes and signatures in the bottom right corner, including a large stylized 'W' and the initials 'H. G.' and 'H. S.'





AUG 20 1944